

2007

UA1F WKU Archives Vertical File - Baseball, 2006-2007

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BASEBALL, from 1C

"I don't think you ever have exactly what you want right off the bat as far as personnel," he said. "Our kids have great character and work ethic and have done everything we have asked them to, so we're going to give it a shot."

The Hilltoppers return seven full-time starters. Offensively, they will be led by junior catcher Jordan Newton, who led the team last year in home runs (13) and extra-base hits (35).

All-Sun Belt Conference performer Matt Ransdell will play exclusively at second base this year after splitting time in the infield and outfield last season. Ransdell batted .349 in 2005 with 41 RBIs.

Dennis Winn, who used a medical redshirt last year after playing in only six games, will make up the other half of the team's double-play combo. Winn played in 51 contests in 2004 and started 29.

Cortez Armstrong returns as the team's starting center fielder. He led the team with 10 stolen bases last year.

"I think we are going to be as strong up the middle as anyone we play," Ransdell said. "We're all experienced, talented players and we all play very hard."

The Toppers also return senior Ben Cooper in the outfield. He is set to be the team's opening-day right fielder. Senior Eric Scriven started 56 games on the infield last year, but is slated to start in left field this season.

The two corner infield positions will be manned by newcomers. True freshman Josh

Rodgers gets the nod at first base while junior college transfer Scotty Coit will be at third.

"Our infielders are very solid, but we're not very deep," Finwood said. "Injuries could play a part because we don't have a lot of guys that can play out there."

Junior Casey Hamilton will once again be the team's designated hitter. He started 49 games in that spot last season.

On the mound, the Toppers will have two newcomers in their starting rotation — right-hander Liam Shanahan transferred from Chipola (Fla.) junior college and lefty Zack Duncan is a junior transfer from David Lipscomb.

The only returning starter is senior J.C. Faircloth. Last year, the southpaw went 2-6 with a 6.38 earned run average.

"The new guys that have come in have done a terrific job and so have the returning guys," Finwood said. "Going into this first weekend, I would say that our strength is on the mound."

Last year, pitching was a sore spot for the Toppers. Western had a team ERA of 6.88.

"That was one of our biggest struggles," Newton said. "We were at the top of the conference offensively ... but it seemed like we lost a ton of games last year because we didn't have anyone to close out games."

WKU will be without Michael Wilhite, who drowned in a swimming accident during the offseason.

The team will be dedicating a new entrance to Denes Field in Wilhite's honor this season.

The entrance has not yet been completed, but when it is, a date

will be decided for the dedication.

"We'd like to do it on a Saturday before league play starts," Finwood said.

Denes Field will host the Sun Belt tournament this year — a first at WKU.

"I have been looking forward to that for four years," Ransdell said. "We won it two years ago on South Alabama's field and it's going to be good to win it on our

•WKU has changed the times for this weekend's home series against Central Michigan. The series now begins with a double-header at 1 p.m. Friday.

The series is scheduled to end Saturday with a 3:30 p.m. contest. Also, anyone with a ticket to that for four years ago, Ransdell said. "We won it two years ago on South Alabama's field and it's going to be good to win it on our

Tops ready to swing away

By OJ STAPLETON
The Daily News
FEB 16 2006

stapleton@baldynnews.com/783-3239
The new-look Western Kentucky baseball team is itching to get on the field and doesn't have long to wait.

Weather permitting, the Hilltoppers open the season at home at 1 p.m. Friday with a doubleheader against Central Michigan.

This will be the first year for coach Chris Finwood, who replaced longtime skipper Joel Murrie last year. Finwood has promised to bring a new, exciting style of baseball to a newly refurbished Nick Denes Field.

Chris Finwood
Western Kentucky baseball coach

"We're going to want to bombard the opposing pitcher," Finwood said. "He is going to have to worry about us bunting, hitting and running, stealing — maybe we can make them make some mistakes and that's when the doubles and the home runs will come." Right now, WKU doesn't have a team that is 100 percent suited to that style, but the players will still be giving it their all, Finwood said.

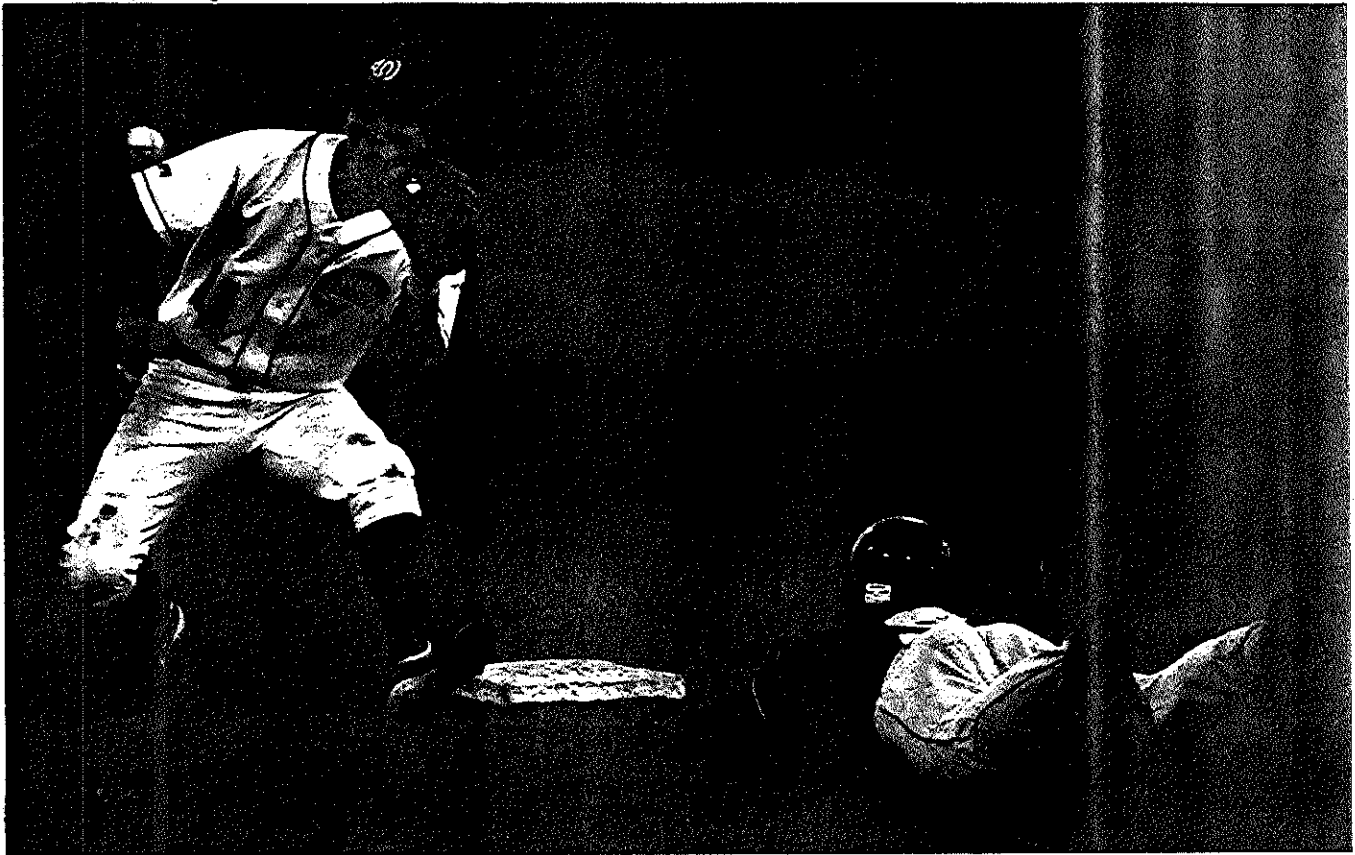
See BASEBALL, 3C



Trevor Frey/Daily News
WKU catcher Jordan Newton looks back as he runs the bases last season at Nick Denes Field.

Double Trouble

Feb. 18, 2006



Jim Winn/Daily News

Central Michigan baserunner J.T. Jones steals second as Western Kentucky shortstop Dennis Winn waits for the ball Friday in the second game of the Hilltoppers' season-opening doubleheader.

Hilltoppers blown out in first two games for new head coach

By MICHAEL COMPTON
The Daily News

mcompton@bgdailynews.com/783-3247

The Chris Finwood era got off to a rough start, with the Western Kentucky baseball team losing a doubleheader to Central Michigan on Friday at Nick Denes Field.

Western fell 15-5 in the opener and briefly led in the nightcap, before Central Michigan used the long ball to glide past the Hilltoppers 20-6 in game two.

Western's pitchers were battered for most of the day — surrendering 35 hits and walking 21 CMU hitters.

"You have to tip your hat to Central Michigan, they have an outstanding club," Finwood said after his debut as Western's coach. "We couldn't stop

them today. Our starting pitchers were on 75 pitch counts and they were at the pitch count by the third inning. That makes it tough to finish out a game at that point. I didn't think we competed great on the mound today and that is something we have got to do a better job of."

In game one, Central Michigan plated three runs in the top of the first, but Western answered with three in the bottom of the first — tying the score 3-3.

The Chippewas came back with a solo homer by Brian Campbell in the second and a solo shot by Troy Moratti in the third, giving CMU a 5-3 advantage.

Central Michigan added two more runs in the third and another score in

the sixth to stretch the margin to 8-3.

The Hilltoppers picked up a run in the sixth on an RBI double by Scotty Colt, but CMU exploded for seven runs in the seventh, making the score 15-4.

Western added a run in the eighth on an RBI double by Dennis Winn, but couldn't get any closer.

The Chippewas pounded out 17 hits. Bryan Mitzel had three hits and four RBIs.

Colt had three hits and Winn and Corteze Armstrong had two hits for Western.

Central Michigan's Ty Dunham went six innings and picked up the win.

Lian Shanahan was the losing pitcher in his WKU debut. Western pitchers

walked nine hitters — including six in the seventh inning.

"You do that against a good team and you are going to get beat," Finwood said. "You've got to locate and we didn't do a good job of that. There were too many walks and too many balls down the middle."

In game two, CMU again scored in the first — on an RBI single by Mitzel — but was unable to add any more runs, despite leaving the bases loaded.

The Hilltoppers got their first lead of the season in the bottom of the inning. Corteze Armstrong walked and Jordan Newton reached on an error. One batter later, Colt doubled home both runners to make the score 2-1.

See BASEBALL, 3B

BASEBALL, from 1B

That lead lasted until the third inning, when Central Michigan scored five times. Kurt Lausher capped the rally with a three-run home run to left that gave the Chippewas a 6-2 advantage.

Western got a run back in the bottom of the inning on an RBI double by Casey Hamilton before CMU got a three-run bomb to dead center field from Ben Humphrey in the top of the fourth. Cody Allen added a two-run single in the inning to stretch the margin to 11-3.

Central Michigan rounded out the scoring with eight runs in the fifth and one run in the sixth. Western had a pair of runs in the

fourth and one run in the sixth.

Josh Collmenter was the winning pitcher, while Zack Duncan took the loss.

James Teas had two hits and five RBIs for Central Michigan. Colt and Matt Ramsdell had two hits and two RBIs each for the Hilltoppers.

"I thought Scotty had a good day," Finwood said. "I thought Dennis Winn had a good day at the plate. Corteze Armstrong had a nice day and Brandon Embry in his college debut had some really good at bats."

Western and Central Michigan will wrap up their three-game series today at 3:30 p.m.

Tops baseball off to slow start

By the Daily News

The Western Kentucky baseball team fell to 0-3 on the season Tuesday with a 7-4 loss to Belmont in Nashville.

Hilltopper starter J.C. Faircloth allowed just two hits in the first three innings, but ran into trouble in the fourth, giving up five runs.

Bruin reliever Nick Whitaker (1-0) picked up the win as he

went three innings, allowing a pair of runs on three hits.

Faircloth (0-1) suffered the loss, allowing five runs on seven hits while striking out five in 3.1 innings.

Four Hilltopper relievers — Garrett Stenbridge, Kenny Gritfin, Bryan Rider and Stephen



Muck — combined to allow Belmont just six hits and a pair of unearned runs.

Offensively, WKU managed just five hits, with Jordan Newton and Dennis Winn each collecting a hit and an RBI.

The Hilltoppers return home to open a three-game weekend series against Ohio at 3 p.m. Friday at Nick Denes Field.

Sunday, falling 14-10 to Ohio at Nick Denes Field.

Trailing 7-3 entering the bottom of the sixth, WKU (2-4) sent nine batters to the plate and scored five times to take its first lead of the afternoon.

The lead was short-lived as Ohio (1-2) responded with a five-run frame of its own in the top of the seventh to pull back out to a 12-8 lead. The Bobcats added two more in the eighth, thanks to an RBI single from Bryant Witt and a run-scoring double off the bat of Matt Stiffler.

The Toppers got a run back in the bottom of the eighth when Josh Rodgers hit the first home run of his collegiate career, then pushed a run across on a Scotty Colt RBI single in the bottom of the ninth before Chris Rigo was able to close the door and help Ohio avoid the weekend sweep.

WKU outlit Ohio 16-15 and was led offensively by Cortez Armstrong, who finished 4-for-5 and was on base five times in six plate appearances.

Daniel Weiss (1-0) picked up the win in relief, while Bryan Rider (0-1) suffered the loss.

J.C. Faircloth started the game for WKU, allowing two runs on six hits in 3.2 innings of work. He also struck out four batters in his second start of the week.

The Hilltoppers get back to action at 6 p.m. Friday when they open a three-game series against Butler. **DN Feb. 27, 2006**

Baseball team loses to Ohio

The Western Kentucky baseball team found itself playing from behind for most of the game

Feb. 25, 2006

Finwood picks up first win

By the Daily News

The Western Kentucky baseball team collected its first win of the season – and head coach Chris Finwood's first win of his career at WKU – defeating Ohio 9-1 at Nick Denes Field on Friday.

The Hilltoppers moved to 1-3 on the year as Ohio dropped to 0-1.

Western put together three runs each in three innings of play. In the sixth inning, WKU – already leading 3-0 – broke the game open when Jordan Newton singled and stole second. Scotty Colt hit a single that was bobbled in the outfield, allowing Newton

to score.

After Casey Hamilton was intentionally walked, he and Colt stole second and third, respectively. The catcher's throw to third was a bit wide, letting Colt walk home. Hamilton was then able to score on a throwing error on Eric Scriven's bunt attempt.

Leading 6-1, WKU added on to its lead in the seventh inning.

Matt Ransdell reached on a single and later scored on a Newton single. With Corteze Armstrong on third, Newton advanced to second on a wild pitch and both scored on a Ben Cooper single to

left field.

Liam Shanahan (1-1) picked up his first career win as a Hilltopper – throwing seven innings, allowing four hits, one run and striking out six. The only Ohio run came on a balk by Shanahan in the seventh inning.

"It all starts with pitching, and Liam was able to keep the ball down and throw strikes," Finwood said. "Our pitchers let our infielders make plays and that is what it takes to win."

WKU was led at the plate by Newton as he went 4-for-4, with three RBIs and three runs scored.

The Hilltoppers will face Ohio again at 1 p.m. Saturday at Nick Denes Field.



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2006 - PAGE 3B

Toppers win again

By the Daily News

The Western Kentucky baseball team scored 10 runs in the first three innings en route to an 11-7 win over Ohio on Saturday at Nick Denes Field.

The Hilltoppers' record improved to 2-3 on the year while the Bobcats dropped to 0-2.

WKU brought all nine batters to the plate in the first inning, scoring six runs on six singles and one Ohio error. Corteze Armstrong, Jordan Newton, Dennis Winn and Josh Rodgers each singled and scored in the inning.

Matt Ransdell highlighted a four-run third inning with a two-run homer to push the lead to 10-5.

Kenny Griffin (1-0) pitched the win – relieving starting pitcher Zack Duncan – after going 2 2-3 innings, giving up a run and striking out two batters.

Ransdell lead the way for the Toppers, going 2-for-3 at the

plate, with three runs, two RBIs and a home run. Eric Scriven had three hits and two RBIs.

The Toppers will look for the series sweep at 1 p.m. today.



Shanahan lifts WKU past Butler

The Western Kentucky baseball team got seven innings from starting pitcher Liam Shanahan in a 9-3 victory over Butler on Friday night at Nick Denes Field.

The Hilltoppers' record improved to 3-4 on the year, while Butler fell to 4-2.

After Casey Hamilton and Dennis Winn singled to lead off the fourth inning, Josh Rodgers was hit by a pitch to load the bases.

Hamilton was then able to score on a wild pitch to tie the game, at 2-2. Brandon Embry grounded out to third to score Winn, Eric Scriven singled to left to score Rodgers and Matt Ransdell reached on an error to plate Ben Cooper to put the Toppers up 5-2 after the inning.

A Scotty Colt single in the sixth helped Scriven score his first run of the game, followed by a Hamilton double to plate two Hilltoppers and push the lead to 9-3.

Shanahan (2-1) scattered nine hits, giving up three runs, while striking out seven and allowing no walks.

"Liam was really solid for us tonight and our defense played great," Hilltopper coach Chris Finwood said. "The offense collected a lot of timely hits, which allowed us to score nine runs on 11 hits."

WKU had five players collect two hits, each while Hamilton added two RBIs.

Jon Dages (1-1) took the loss for the Bulldogs, giving up five runs on six hits in four innings.

The Hilltoppers and Butler will start game two of the series at 3 p.m. today at Nick Denes Field.

Armstrong leads Western by Butler

With the Western Kentucky baseball team trailing 7-6, Corteze Armstrong took a pitch to the left center field wall for a base-clearing triple to put the Toppers up by two runs in the eighth and lead the Hilltoppers to a 12-10 victory over Butler on Saturday afternoon at Nick Denes Field.

The Hilltoppers' record moved to 4-4 on the year as Butler dropped to 4-3.

WKU was trailing 7-5 in the eighth inning with two outs and only one runner on base. Brandon Embry got the rally going with a single, then Eric Scriven knocked in a run to cut the lead to one.

After Armstrong's three-run triple, Scotty Colt, Casey Hamilton and Dennis Winn drove in a run each to push the Hilltopper lead to 12-7.

WKU scored seven runs on eight hits in the inning.

Matt Ransdell lead off the first with a drive over the left field wall for his second homerun of the season.

Garrett Stembridge (1-0) earned the win in relief after going 1.2 innings, giving up one hit and zero earned runs. Kenny Griffin started the game going four innings, while allowing seven hits and five runs. Winn added four hits and two runs while Scriven put together a three hit day.

WKU looks for the sweep against Butler at 1 p.m. today.

WKU baseball gets sweep of Butler

By the Daily News

The Western Kentucky baseball team earned its first series sweep since 2004, beating Butler 3-2 on Sunday at Nick Denes Field.

After J.C. Faircloth left the game in the first inning with an

injury, Ben Paxton (1-0) came in to record no runs on three hits and five strikeouts in 6 1/3 innings of relief for the victory.

The winning run came in the fifth after Jordan Newton hit a sacrifice fly to plate Corteze Armstrong from third and put the Top-

pers ahead 3-2.

Chad Adcock made his first appearance of the season, going two innings and only giving up one hit for the save.

WKU returns to action Tuesday against Kentucky in Lexington.

MAR 06 2006

MAR 05 2006

Daily News

Daily News Mar. 4, 2006

MAR 06 2006

WKU baseball team knocks off UK

By the Daily News

The Western Kentucky baseball team ran its winning streak to four games by defeating Kentucky 7-6 on Tuesday afternoon at Cliff Hagan Stadium in Lexington.

The Hilltoppers' record moved to 6-4 on the year while the Wildcats dropped to 9-3.

With the game tied at 5-5, Corteze Armstrong led off the ninth inning with a single. After he advanced to third, Kentucky's

Zach Dials balked to allow Armstrong to score the go-ahead run. Casey Hamilton followed with a single up the middle to score Jordan Newton and give the Hilltoppers a two-run lead heading into the bottom of the ninth.

John Shelby took a pitch down the left-field line for a double to score Shaun Lehmann to close the

gap to one before Armstrong made a diving catch with two outs to seal the victory for the Toppers.

Garrett Stenbridge (2-0) earned the win in three innings of relief, giving up four hits and only two runs. Jordan Newton added two hits, three RBIs and two runs for WKU.

The Hilltoppers travel to Morehead State for a three-game series starting Friday.



MAR 08 2006

Page 2B - SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 2006

Briefly

From staff and wire reports.

WKU baseball wins fifth straight

A trio of Hilltoppers collected three hits each as Western Kentucky picked up a 10-5 win Friday in the opener of a three-game series at Morehead State at Allen Field. The victory ran WKU's winning streak to five games.

The Hilltoppers (7-4) plated nine runs in their final four at bats to pull away for the victory. Morehead State (6-7) grabbed a 3-1 lead with single runs in the second, fourth and fifth innings.

Liam Shanahan (3-1) recorded a victory in his third straight start, allowing three runs on seven hits in six innings of work. He also struck out four Morehead State batters. Garrett Stenbridge closed the door as he allowed just two hits in the final 2 1-3 innings, picking up a pair of strikeouts in the ninth to record his first save of the season.

Offensively, Matt Ransdell led WKU's 16-hit attack, going 3-for-6 with three RBIs and two runs scored. Casey Hamilton and Josh Rodgers also recorded three-hit games, while Scotty Colt added the first home run of his Hilltopper career.

The Hilltoppers and Eagles continue their three-game set today, then close out the series Sunday. Both games are slated for noon CST.

Daily News

Topper baseball wins 5-4

By the Daily News

Freshman Ryan Jamison tripled to lead off the bottom of the ninth inning, then scored the deciding run on Matt Ransdell's sacrifice fly to give the Western Kentucky baseball team a 5-4 win over Akron on Friday at Nick Denes Field.

The Hilltoppers (8-4) also got some big plays from their defense

throughout the contest, turning three double plays and stranding eight Akron (5-9) baserunners to win their sixth straight game.

Cortez Armstrong finished 2-for-2 and scored twice for WKU, with Scotty Colt adding two hits and two runs in three at-bats with three RBIs.

Western plays Akron again today at Nick Denes Field, with the first pitch scheduled for 1 p.m.



Mar. 18, 2006

SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 2006 - PAGE 3B

Tops beat Akron for seventh straight win

Dennis Winn had his second four-hit game of the season to lead the Western Kentucky baseball team to its seventh straight win, a 12-7 victory over Akron on Saturday at Nick Denes Field.

The Hilltoppers never trailed in the game, but broke it open with a five-run sixth inning. WKU sent 10 batters to the plate in the frame, as it quickly loaded the bases with one out. Scotty Colt followed with a single to plate two runs and stretch the lead to 5-1.

Jordan Newton then tripled down the left-field line, clearing

the bases and driving in two more. Patrick Gliha came in to relieve Akron starter Tom

Farmer, and was greeted with a Casey Hamilton single that drove home Newton to give the Toppers an 8-1 lead.

Winn led the Hilltoppers, going 4-for-4 with three RBIs, and was one of five Hilltoppers to record a multihit game.

WKU - now riding its longest winning streak since 2002 - will go after its eighth straight win today when it closes out the weekend against Wisconsin-Milwaukee at 4 p.m.



Newton powers Toppers

By The Daily News

Jordan Newton hit his first three home runs of the season and the Western Kentucky University baseball team held on to defeat Wisconsin-Milwaukee 14-13 Sunday afternoon at Nick Denes Field.

The Hilltoppers improved their winning streak to eight games and their record to 10-4 while the Panthers dropped to 5-8 on the year.

WKU jumped on the scoreboard with seven runs in the first inning after Scotty Colt hit a three-run shot followed by Newton's first bomb of the day. Brandon Embry doubled down the left field line to add another run and Matt Ransdell took his second at-bat of the inning to score Embry.

The Hilltoppers added four more runs in the third on a Cortez Armstrong double to score Embry for his second run of

the day. Newton then hit his third homer of the day - a two-run shot.

The Panthers cut the WKU lead to one run in the eighth after Ross McCoy doubled to left center to score two runs, but Garrett Stembbridge was able to close the game in the ninth for his second save of the season.

Wisconsin-Milwaukee added four runs in the fourth on an RBI double by Rob Brockel, followed by a Dan Buchholz three-run home run.

Newton went 3-for-4 with five RBI and three runs scored with Ransdell, Colt and Casey Hamilton adding three hits each.

J.C. Faircloth (1-1) earned his first win of the season after pitching three innings in relief and only giving up one earned run.

The Hilltoppers hosts Louisville at 3 p.m. Tuesday at Nick Denes Field.



MAR 20 2006

WKU baseball loses to Morehead

By the Daily News

The Western Kentucky baseball team's eight-game winning streak ended Wednesday with a 10-3 loss to Morehead State at Nick Denes Field.

Mark Rhodes (1-1) earned the win in relief, going three innings, allowing no runs and striking out two batters. Zack Duncan (0-2) took the loss after starting the

game — pitching the first three innings — and giving up only one run.

The Hilltoppers (10-5) are back in action at 6 p.m. Friday when they open up conference action against New Orleans at Nick Denes Field.

Toppers open Sun Belt with home loss

The Western Kentucky baseball team dropped its first Sun Belt Conference game of the season, falling to New Orleans 14-5 Friday night at Nick Denes Field.

New Orleans (14-10, 1-0) put the game away in the sixth inning by scoring nine runs. David Broussard reached on an error by the shortstop to score two New Orleans runners and make the score 7-4. A two-RBI single by Greg Wolfe made the score 11-4 and a base-clearing double by Broussard in his second at-bat of the inning finished out the scoring for the Privateers, making the score 14-4.

The Privateers used back-to-back homers in the fourth inning by Wolfe and Alex Webster to jump ahead 4-1.

The Toppers (10-6, 0-1) scored two runs in the bottom of the fifth when Scotty Colt doubled home Corteze Armstrong and Matt Ransdell to cut the UNO lead to 5-4.

Colt tied the game at one in the first inning with his fourth homer of the year over the left-field bullpen.

Liam Shanahan (3-2) took the loss, going 5 2-3 innings and giving up 11 runs on 10 hits. WKU was led by Colt, who collected three hits, three RBIs, and scored a run.

The second game of the series begins at 3 p.m. today at Nick Denes Field.

WKU baseball avoids sweep with win

By the Daily News

A day after being shut out for the first time this season, the Western Kentucky baseball team exploded for 16 hits in an 13-3 eight-inning win over New Orleans on Sunday in the finale of a three-game series at Nick Denes Field.

The win improved WKU to 11-7 and 1-2 in the Sun Belt, and snapped a three-game losing streak. The Privateers fell to 15-11 and 2-1 in the conference.

The Hilltoppers did most of their damage in the first two innings, with Casey Hamilton accounting for five of the seven RBI. The WKU designated hitter doubled home a pair of runs in the bottom of the first to get WKU on

the board, then capped off a five-run second inning with a three-run, bases-clearing double that gave the Toppers a 7-0 lead.

Senior Matt Ransdell led the Hilltopper offense with four hits, while Corteze Armstrong and Hamilton collected three hits each.

Hilltopper pitching limited the Privateers to just five hits on the afternoon, with Ben Paxton (2-0) getting the win as he went five innings and allowed three runs on four hits with three strikeouts.

The Hilltoppers host Vanderbilt at 6 p.m. Tuesday at Nick Denes Field before heading on the road for a Sun Belt series at Arkansas-Little Rock this weekend.

MAR 27 2005



Toppers drop second straight

By the Daily News

New Orleans scored in six different innings and recorded 21 hits on its way to a 16-0 victory over the Western Kentucky baseball team Saturday at Nick Denes Field.

Privateer starter Matt Eichholtz held WKU to just two hits — singles by Dennis Winn and Jack Ambrose — through the first seven innings.

The Hilltopper offense collected just three hits on the day, with an Eric Scriven double in the eighth accounting for other WKU hit.

On the other side, New Orleans had a season-high hit total. Starting catcher Josh Tarnow led the way, going 5-for-5 on the afternoon.

Eichholtz (2-0) picked up the win for the Privateers as he allowed only two hits and struck out a pair of batters in seven innings of work.

Kenny Griffin (2-1) suffered the loss for WKU.

The loss was the third straight for the Hilltoppers, as they fell to 10-7 on the season and 0-2 in Sun Belt Conference play. UNO improved to 15-10 and 2-0 in the conference.

The Hilltoppers will look to avoid a sweep at 1 p.m. today as they close out the series with UNO.



PAGE 4C - WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 2006

WKU baseball tops Vandy

By the Daily News

A Matt Ransdell double that scored Eric Scriven helped the Western Kentucky baseball team beat Vanderbilt 6-4 Tuesday at Nick Denes Field.

Ransdell clinched the game in the eighth inning when he doubled down the left field line to score Scriven and put WKU ahead 6-4.

WKU used a four-run fourth inning to take its first lead in the ballgame after Brandon Embry was hit by a pitch to score Casey Hamilton.

Josh Rodgers hit a sacrifice fly to center field to score Jordan Newton and Ransdell added a fielder's choice to score Dennis Winn to make the WKU lead 4-2.

The Toppers added a run in the fifth when Hamilton singled home Scotty Colt to push the score to 5-2.

Evan Teague (1-0) earned the victory, pitching three innings in relief and only giving up one hit and a run. Bryan Rider went 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ innings, while only giving up a

hit to earn his first save of the season.

Ransdell added two RBIs for the Toppers, Hamilton singled twice and drove in a run, while Colt scored twice.

WKU (12-7) travels to Little Rock, Ark., at 6 p.m. Friday to take on Arkansas-Little Rock in a three-game series.



Western baseball comes back for win

By the Daily News

Western Kentucky baseball got a go-ahead single in the ninth inning from Jack Ambrose and held on to defeat Arkansas-Little Rock 5-4 Friday night at Gary Hogan Field.

The Hilltoppers' record improved to 13-7 on the season (2-2 Sun Belt Conference) while UALR lost for the first time in 13 games at home and dropped to 19-12 - 1-3 in SBC play.

Scotty Colt walked to start the ninth inning and scored on Ambrose's two-out hit.

WKU was down 4-2 heading into the eighth inning. Dennis Winn led off the inning with his

second home run of the season to cut the gap to one run. Brandon Embry tied the score with an RBI single.

Bryan Rider (1-1) earned the win in relief by going the final two innings, giving up no runs and striking out three batters.

Liam Shanahan gave up five hits and three earned runs in 5 2-3 innings while striking out three.

Adam Miller (5-2) took the loss, giving up three runs in three innings of relief. Jacob Stover added two hits while Eilers scored two runs for the Trojans.

The three-game series resumes at 2 p.m. today at Gary Hogan Field.



Tops fall hard in Little Rock

By the Daily News

The Western Kentucky baseball team gave up seven runs in the first inning and fell to Arkansas-Little Rock 12-8 Saturday afternoon at Gary Hogan Field.

The Hilltoppers' record fell to 13-8 on the year and 2-3 in Sun Belt Conference play while the Trojans improved to 20-12 (2-3 in SBC action).

The Toppers tied the game at eight in the seventh inning after Casey Hamilton singled up the middle to score Scotty Colt and Jordan Newton. Eric Scriven followed with a double to score Hamilton and Dennis Winn to tie the game.

The Trojans put the game away in the eighth on a sacrifice fly to score a run, and Tim Lawrence was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded to make

the score 12-8.

Newton hit his fourth bomb of the season, a two-run homer to left center to put the Toppers ahead 2-0 after the first half inning.

Matt Bates (2-2) earned the win with 2 2-3 innings of relief, only giving up one run and three hits.

Steve Hupper (0-1) took the loss for WKU, giving up two runs in 2 1-3 innings of relief. Kenny Griffin started the game and went four innings, giving up eight runs on five hits. Hamilton collected three hits and three RBIs on the day while Newton collected three hits and three runs.

The series concludes at 1 p.m. today.



APR 02 2006

Apr. 1, 2006

Toppers drop third straight

By the Daily News

The Western Kentucky baseball team fell 12-9 to Austin Peay on Tuesday at Nick Denes Field.

It was the third straight loss for the Hilltoppers (13-10). The Governors moved to 19-8.

The big blow came in the fourth inning as the Gobs sent 10 men to the plate and scored six times. APSU loaded the bases with one out against WKU reliever Evan Teague before Cody Youngblood drove home a pair of runs with a double to give the Governors their first lead of the night at 3-2. The other four runs scored without the benefit of a hit as two Governors scored on balks, while two more crossed the plate thanks to a wild pitch and Hilltopper throwing error.

WKU collected 14 hits on the night - two each from Matt Ransdell, Corteze Armstrong, Casey Hamilton, Dennis Winn and Jack Ambrose. Eric Scriven drove home a pair of runs to lead the Toppers.

The Hilltoppers return to action at 6 p.m. today as they host rival Eastern Kentucky.

WKU falls to UALR

By the Daily News

Arkansas-Little Rock rallied from a seven-run deficit to defeat Western Kentucky 14-13 on Sunday afternoon at Gary Hogan Field in Little Rock, Ark.

WKU fell to 13-9 on the season and 2-4 in the Sun Belt Conference, while UALR improved to 21-12 and 3-3 in the league.

UALR sent 10 batters to the plate in the eighth and scored six times.

The Hilltoppers threatened in the top of the ninth, but were unable to push an insurance run across.

In the bottom of the inning, Bryan Rider retired the leadoff hitter, but then gave up back-to-back singles to Brian Asbill and Matt Garland to put the winning run on base.

Ryan Gotcher then drew a walk to load the bases, and Brian Smiley singled to right to drive home the tying run. Jacob Stover followed with a single over a drawn-in outfield to bring home

the winning run and complete the comeback.

Casey Hamilton and Jordan Newton led the Hilltopper offense with two hits each, while Hamilton drove home a team-high three runs in the contest.

Rider (1-2) suffered the loss, giving up the final five Trojan runs. Adam Miller earned the victory in relief for UALR.

WKU returns home for its next five games, beginning at 6 p.m. Tuesday, when the Hilltoppers host Austin Peay at Nick Denes Field.

APR 05 2006

APR 03 2006

Troy rallies to beat Western baseball

Troy used two big innings to come from behind and pick up a 14-10 win over the Western Kentucky baseball team Saturday afternoon in a Sun Belt Conference weekend series.

The game was suspended in the bottom of the third Friday night when storms moved through the area.

The Hilltoppers started the day with a 6-2 lead after they scored six times in the bottom of the first inning before the rains came.

The first four Troy batters collected hits in the top of the fourth inning off Liam Shanahan, including a two-RBI double from Mike Felix. A pair of run-scoring groundouts by Josh Blackwell and Ian Craze quickly tied it at 6-6.

Western bounced back for a 10-6 lead that it held until the sixth, when seven unearned runs by the Trojans gave them their first lead of the afternoon. With two outs and a runner on first, a ground ball by Tom King was misplayed, leading to the big inning for Troy.

Josh Dew then tied the game with a home run off the scoreboard in right-center against reliever J.C. Faircloth. Faircloth then hit the next two batters, and Mike Felix homered to right to cap off the frame and give Troy a 13-10 lead.

Jordan Newton led the Hilltopper offense as he went 4-for-5 with three doubles and four RBIs in the contest.

Apr. 9, 2006
Daily News

Troy sweeps Western baseball

By MICHAEL COMPTON
The Daily News

mcompton@bgdailynews.com/783-3247

After giving up 29 runs in the first two games, the Western Kentucky baseball team wanted to avoid a sweep Sunday by visiting Troy.

And while the Hilltoppers did get a solid start from Steve Hupper, it still wasn't enough. The Trojans pulled away for an 11-5 win and a series sweep. Troy (24-9, 6-0 Sun Belt Conference) scored in each of the last five innings, putting Western (14-13, 2-7 SBC) firmly in the basement in the Sun Belt Conference standings.

WKU coach Chris Finwood said the three losses made for a disappointing weekend.

"It's disappointing, but we didn't play well enough to win one," Finwood said. "You get what you deserve, I think. They have a very good club — the best offensive club we have faced all year. Up until today, I thought we swung the bats well enough to win. We just didn't pitch well. Today, we didn't do a whole lot of anything."

Hupper got off to a slow start — allowing three runs in the first — but settled in and allowed only one hit in



Western Kentucky outfielder Jack Ambrose dives for a ball Sunday at Nick Denes Field. Troy beat the Hilltoppers 11-5.

Joshua McCoy/Daily News

the next three innings.

Western bounced back with runs in each of the first three innings. Casey Hamilton had an RBI single in the first, Jack Ambrose an RBI single in the second, and Jordan Newton a solo homer in the third to make the score 3-3.

Troy regained a 4-3 advantage in the top of the fifth when Hupper gave up an RBI double to Tom King.

Hupper got out of the inning without further damage and finished the day allowing four runs and six hits over five innings.

"Hupp did a good job," Finwood said. "He kept us in it. If a guy holds a team like that to four runs, you feel OK about it."

WKU's bullpen didn't fare quite as well. Troy added two runs in the sixth

and one run in the seventh — with two errors leading directly to two of the runs — stretching the margin to 6-3.

In the eighth inning, King had his second two-run double of the day, making the score 8-3. The Hilltoppers got a pair of runs in the bottom of the eighth, but Troy put the game away with a two-run home run by Blake Green in the top of the ninth.

"The bullpen blew up on us," Finwood said. "There just hasn't been any consistency down there all season."

Joe Hallahan picked up the win for Troy. The left-hander scattered five hits in seven innings and struck out four.

"He pitched very well and had better command of the ball as the game went on," Troy coach Bobby Pierce said. "He got in a groove out there. We're very proud of his outing. He gave us all we need on a Sunday start."

Western's Eric Scriven had two hits and extended his hitting streak to 13 games. Hamilton added two hits and two RBIs.

Western returns to action at 6 p.m. Tuesday at Vanderbilt.

row for the Hilltoppers, as they fell to 14-14 on the season. Vanderbilt improved to 22-11.

Commodore starter Tyler Rhoden picked up the win, limiting the Toppers to just five hits over 6 2/3 innings and allowing just one unearned run.

Eric Scriven accounted for two of WKU's eight hits, extending his hitting streak to 14 games. Jack Ambrose also collected two hits.

WKU is back on the road this weekend, visiting Middle Tennessee for a three-game Sun Belt Conference series.

WKU baseball roughed up at Vanderbilt
The Vanderbilt baseball team erupted with four home runs Tuesday on its way to a 15-1 win over Western Kentucky in Nashville.

The loss was the fourth in a

Apr. 12, 2006 Daily News

DAILY NEWS, BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY

APR 17 2006

Hilltoppers fall at Middle Tennessee

By the Daily News

The Western Kentucky baseball team lost 11-5 to Middle Tennessee on Sunday in the final game of its weekend series in Murfreesboro.

MTSU took two of the three games on the weekend, and improved to 17-14 and 5-4 in the Sun Belt Conference with the victory. The Hilltoppers dropped to 15-16 overall and 3-9 in the league.

Offensively, Matt Ransdell, Corteze Armstrong and Casey Hamilton led the Hilltoppers with two hits each. Ransdell also extended his hitting streak to 10 games.

The Hilltoppers wrap up their five-game roadswing Tuesday when they visit Austin Peay for a 6:30 p.m. game in Clarksville, Tenn.



APR 16 2006

DAILY NEWS, BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY

Hilltopper baseball beats MT

By the Daily News

The Western Kentucky baseball team used a four-run third inning and got 6 1-3 innings of scoreless relief from its bullpen Saturday to earn a 7-5 win over Middle Tennessee.

The win moved the Hilltoppers to 15-15 overall and 3-8 in the Sun Belt Conference, while the Blue Raiders fell to 16-14 and 4-4 in the league.

Offensively, Scotty Colt led the Hilltoppers, going 3-for-5 and extending his hitting streak to 11 games. Dennis Winn finished with a pair of hits and two RBIs.

The teams plays the rubber match of their series today at 1 p.m. at Reese Smith Field.

Daily News

Briefly

From staff and wire reports.

Hilltoppers earn split with IPFW

The Western Kentucky University baseball team dropped a 4-3 decision Saturday afternoon in game one of a nonconference doubleheader with IPFW, but came back to claim a 9-3 victory in the nightcap to earn the split.

Both WKU and IPFW are now 16-18 on the season.

WKU scored single runs in three different innings of game one. It took an early lead as Matt Ransdell led off the bottom of the first with a single, then scored on a one-out triple by Scotty Colt.

Then, trailing 4-2 in the bottom of the ninth, Jordan Newton hit a two-out solo homer to make it 4-3.

Both teams scored unearned runs on sacrifice flies for their first runs of game two. The Hilltoppers then took the lead in the fourth when Newton hit his second home run of the day to make it 3-1.

Casey Hamilton singled home a run with a bases-loaded single in the sixth. Dennis Winn was then hit by a pitch to force home Corteze Armstrong with the fifth Hilltopper run of the game for a 5-2 lead.

Starter Steve Hupper earned his first win of the season, going six innings while allowing just three runs and striking out five.

Armstrong put together the second four-hit game of his career, collecting three on bunts. Ransdell also collected three hits for WKU.

The teams will play the rubber match of their three-game series today at 1 p.m. at Nick Denes Field.

Topper baseball team falls at Austin Peay

The Western Kentucky baseball team lost 11-5 to Austin Peay on Tuesday in Clarksville, Tenn.

WKU starter Garrett Stenbridge (3-2) - making just his second career start - suffered the loss as he gave up five runs on three hits in 2 2/3 innings of work.



Matt Ransdell and Jordan Newton homered for the Hilltoppers (15-17).

Western Kentucky returns to Nick Denes Field for the first time in two weeks when it opens a three-game series with IUPUI-Fort Wayne on Friday.

Daily News Apr. 19, 2006

Hilltopper baseball game postponed

Rain has forced the postponement of Friday's Western Kentucky baseball game with IPFW.

The teams now open their three-game weekend series with a doubleheader today, beginning at 3 p.m. Both games are nine-inning contests, with the second game scheduled to begin 30 minutes after the conclusion of game one.

The Hilltoppers and Mastodons wrap up the series with a 1 p.m. game on Sunday.

*Apr 22, 2006
Daily News*

WKU baseball wins series 2-1

By the Daily News

The Western Kentucky baseball team earned a 13-4 win over IUPUI-Fort Wayne in the weekend series finale Sunday afternoon at Nick Denes Field.

The win gave the Hilltoppers two of the three games on the weekend.

Jordan Newton's blast with one out in the inning tied the game at 4-4.

The Hilltopper bullpen did the job for the third straight day as the trio of Bryan Rider, Adam Balcom and J.C. Faircloth blanked the Mastodons over the final 5-1/3 innings. In the three games, the pen held IPFW scoreless in 10 innings of work, allowing just five hits and combining to strike out nine.

Five Hilltoppers collected multi-hit games, with Jack Ambrose leading the way with three hits and three runs scored.

The Hilltoppers (17-18) are back on the road Tuesday at Louisville. WKU hosts Sun Belt Conference opponent South Alabama in a three-game series beginning Friday.



WKU tops Louisville in extra innings

The Western Kentucky baseball team won 4-3 in 10 innings at Louisville on Tuesday.

The winning run came across when Corteze Armstrong scored from third on a Griffin Bailey wild pitch with two outs in the top of the 10th to give the Hilltoppers their first lead of the ballgame.

Armstrong reached with a one-out double to left, then moved to third on a C.J. Wamsley groundout before scoring on the ball to the screen.

The Hilltoppers collected eight hits on the night, with Jordan Newton going 2-for-3. Dennis Winn finished with a

pair of RBIs.

Adam Balcom (1-0) picked up his first win as a Hilltopper, allowing a hit and a walk in three innings of relief.

The Toppers (18-18) return to Sun Belt Conference action this weekend, as they host South Alabama in a three-game series beginning Friday at Nick Denes Field.



Freshman pitcher Ryan Rogge earned her third win in as many starts as the Western Kentucky softball team won the second of two games with Tennessee State on Tuesday at the WKU Softball Field.

TSU took game one, 1-0, but the Hilltoppers responded with a 4-0 win in game two.

Rogge (3-6) struck out nine TSU batters - including seven of eight during one stretch - in seven innings and surrendered only two hits. The loss went to Lauren Weber (3-10) after she gave up two runs in 2 2-3 innings.

WKU will visit No. 12 Louisiana-Lafayette this weekend for a three-game series.

APR 26 2006 Daily News

Jaguars take first of three game series

By the Daily News

South Alabama put up three runs in both the fourth and sixth innings to take the opener of a three-game series with Western Kentucky 7-2 Friday night at Nick Denes Field.

The loss dropped WKU to 18-19 and 3-10 in the Sun Belt, while South Alabama picked up its ninth straight win to improve to 31-15 and 11-5 in the league.

The Hilltoppers got a quick lead as Jordan Newton led off the second inning with his league-leading 11th home run of the season — and fifth in the last six games — to make it 1-0.

The Hilltoppers got a run back in the bottom of the seventh when Dennis Winn scored on a fielder's choice groundout by Eric Scriven to make it 7-2. However, that

would be all they could get as USA starter P.J. Walters went the distance to improve to 7-2 on the year.

Walters scattered seven hits and struck out 12 in his third complete-game effort of the season. Liam Shanahan (3-5) threw the first complete game of his Hilltopper career, but surrendered 12 hits to USA while striking out six.

Cortez Armstrong picked up two of WKU's seven hits, while Matt Ransdell extended his hitting streak to 16 games with a third-inning single. Five Jaguars collected a pair of hits.

The Toppers and Jaguars continue their series at 3 p.m. today. Before the game at 2:20 p.m., WKU will dedicate the left-field entrance to Nick Denes Field as the Michael Wilhite Memorial entrance.



Times changed for FIU games at Nick Denes Field

With commencement ceremonies on Western Kentucky's campus May 12 and 13, the baseball team announced Monday that start times were changed for the first two games of a Sun Belt Conference weekend series with Florida International at Nick Denes Field.

The Hilltoppers and Golden Panthers throw the first pitch of the series opener at 4 p.m. Friday, instead of the original start time of 6 p.m. Saturday's contest was moved up to a 1 p.m. start. The series finale is at noon Sunday as originally scheduled.

The Toppers host Belmont at 3 p.m. Wednesday before hitting the road for a pivotal three-game series at Arkansas State this weekend.



Daily News

MAY 02 2006

Toppers knock off Cardinals

By the Daily News

The Western Kentucky baseball team put up runs in each of its final six at bats en route to a 10-6 win over Louisville on Tuesday at Nick Denes Field.

The win improved the Hilltoppers to 19-20 on the year, and gave them their first sweep in the home-and-home series with the Cardinals since 1997. The Cards fell to 18-27 with the loss.

Louisville got on the board first when a two-out single by Alec Lowrey plated Pete Rodriguez. An inning later, U of L extended the lead to 3-0 with a pair of unearned runs.

WKU put together a big inning in its half of the third, plating five runs. With the bases loaded and one out, Scotty Colt drove home Eric Scriven with a sacrifice fly. Jordan Newton then gave WKU the lead when he hit his 12th home run of the season to make it 4-3.

Louisville tied the score at 5-5 in the fourth, but WKU grabbed the advantage back in the bottom of the inning when Cortez Armstrong singled home Ryan Jamison. The lead stretched to 7-5 in the fifth when Hamilton drove home Newton with a double. Colt added an insurance run in the sixth when he hit his fifth home run of the year into the Hilltopper bullpen in left to make it an 8-5 game.

A fielder's choice by Scriven in the seventh scored Winn with WKU's ninth run of the game in the seventh. Matt Ransdell then got WKU into double figures when he scored in the eighth to stretch the lead to 10-5.

Louisville threatened in the ninth when Chris Cates led off with a double and scored when Johnson singled to right to cut the Topper lead to four.

Bryan Rider (3-2) earned the win out of the pen, while Jon Harbridge (1-2) suffered the loss in relief for U of L.

Hamilton led the Hilltopper offense with three hits, while Winn and Ransdell collected a pair of hits each. Ransdell extended his hitting streak to 18 games and has now equaled the eighth-longest streak in school history. Lowrey finished with three hits to lead the Cardinals.

The Toppers return to action today, hosting Belmont at 3 p.m.

MAY 03 2006

WKU baseball

MAY 08 2006

loses to ASU

By the Daily News

is at noon.

A late Western Kentucky rally came up short Sunday, resulting in the Hilltoppers' 15-12 loss at Tomlinson Stadium in the finale of a three-game Sun Belt Conference baseball series.

A nine-run Indians second inning proved to be the difference.

ASU took two of the three games on the weekend as it improved to 21-23 overall and 6-11 in the Sun Belt. WKU fell to 20-23 and 4-13.


WKU starter Evan Teague (2-2) suffered the loss as he surrendered eight runs in 1-2/3 innings, while Joel Boesch (3-7) earned the win for Arkansas State.

Eric Scriven finished with three hits to lead the Hilltopper offense, while Jack Ambrose drove home four runs.

The Hilltoppers will take five days off for final exams, returning to the field Friday for the final home series of the regular season beginning with Florida International.

Game times for that series were shifted so there would be no conflict with WKU graduation ceremonies. The first pitch of the opener is scheduled for 4 p.m. Friday, with Saturday's game starting at 1 p.m. Sunday's finale





Ransdell honored for academics

On Thursday Western Kentucky senior second baseman Matt Ransdell was named to the ESPN The Magazine Academic all-District IV first team.

The all-district teams are voted on by members of the College Sports Information Directors of America.

Ransdell was a second-team all-district pick in 2005.

The Bowling Green native will be on the ballot for Academic All-America honors.

Ransdell will start in his 155th straight game today when the Hilltoppers host Florida International at 4 p.m. at Nick Denes Field. This season, he holds a .315 batting average with 12 doubles, a career-high four home runs and 32 RBIs. A second-team all-Sun Belt honoree last season, Ransdell ranks in the top 10 in four career categories at WKU — at-bats, runs, hits and triples.

He put together a 20-game hit streak this season, which ties for the fifth-longest streak in school history.

Daily News

MAY 12 2006

Hilltoppers lose, still gain ground

By the Daily News

The Western Kentucky baseball team dropped an 11-3 decision to Louisiana-Lafayette on Thursday night at M.L.

"Tigue" Moore Field, but still moved within one game of clinching the final spot in next week's Aeropostale Sun Belt Conference Tournament in Bowling Green.

Thanks to Florida International's 13-6 win over Arkansas-Little Rock, the Hilltoppers need a win or a UALR loss in the final two games of the weekend to wrap up the No. 8 seed.

Two-out runs was the difference on Thursday — with Louisiana-Lafayette (35-18, 17-5) scoring 10 of 11 runs with two out.

Lafayette started that trend early, scoring three times in the first two innings.

WKU starter J.C. Faircloth posted two straight scoreless innings, but UL put together another two-out rally in the fifth. After the first two hitters of the inning were retired, a walk and a single kept the inning alive. Josh Landry and

Jeffries Tatford followed with back-to-back run-scoring singles to right as the Cajuns extended their lead to 5-0.



The Cajuns added another insurance run in the seventh when Tatford singled home Jonathan Lucroy to stretch the lead to 6-0.

WKU (22-26, 5-16 SBC) finally got to Hunter Moody in the eighth, mounting a two-out rally of its own. After Corteze Armstrong was hit by a pitch, Scotty Colt singled to put two men on. Jordan Newton followed with his 14th home run of the season to cut the Cajun lead in half.

ULL put the game away in the

bottom of the inning scoring five times.

Moody (11-2) pitched a scoreless ninth inning to register his fifth complete-game victory of the season, allowing three runs on eight hits and striking out six.

Faircloth (1-4) gave up five runs on eight hits in five innings of work in the losing effort.

Dennis Winn and Scotty Colt each had two hits for the Hilltoppers. Tatford finished 4-for-5 with five RBIs to pace the Cajuns.

The two teams continue their series tonight at 6:30 p.m. The series concludes at 2 p.m. Saturday.

Toppers feeling right at home

By OJ STAPLETON
The Daily News

MAY 24 2006

ostapleton@bigdailynews.com/783-3239

The Western Kentucky baseball team didn't exactly finish the regular season on a high note.

The Hilltoppers lost six of their last seven Sun Belt Conference games, but that was still good enough to finish a half game ahead of last-place Arkansas-Little Rock for the final spot in the league tournament, which gets under way today at Nick Denes Field.

"We needed to get in so badly," senior captain Matt Ramsdell said. "If we had finished ninth, it would have been flat-out embarrassing."

Anybody is going to be more comfortable playing in this kind of atmosphere. The kids are used to playing here, so I expect us to come out and compete.

Now that they're in the tournament, though, the Toppers are going in with the mindset that anything is possible.

"This is like a whole new season," junior catcher Jordan Newton said. "I

Chris Finwood
Western Kentucky baseball coach

think we can string together a run. In my freshman year, we were the seven seed and breezed right through that tournament."

This marks the first time Western Kentucky has ever hosted the Sun Belt tournament, and that added edge is a good thing for the Toppers, who are 15-16 at home and just 7-12 on the road.

"Anybody is going to be more comfortable playing in this kind of atmosphere," WKU coach Chris Finwood said. "The kids are used to playing here, so I expect us to come out and compete."

Western faces top-seeded Troy at 7:30 p.m. today in the first round.

The Trojans, who are in their first season in the Sun Belt, swept WKU at Denes

Field in a three-game series in early April.

The Toppers send junior right-hander Liam Shanahan to the mound against Troy. Shanahan comes in with a 3-8 record and a 5.70 ERA.

"He'll give us a chance — he has done that all year," Finwood said. "We haven't always scored for him, but he has pitched great. If he's on his game, we'll have a good shot at it."

If Western holds out any hope of winning the double-elimination tournament, it's crucial to win tonight, according to Finwood.

"People that have watched us play know that we don't have much pitching

See TOPPERS, 3C



Today

Game 1 - 9 a.m.
No. 3 South Alabama vs.
No. 6 Middle Tennessee

Game 2 - 12:30 p.m.
No. 2 UL Lafayette vs.
No. 7 Arkansas State

Game 3 - 4 p.m.
No. 4 Florida International vs.
No. 5 New Orleans

Game 4 - 7:30 p.m.
No. 1 Troy vs.
No. 8 Western Kentucky

—Tournament is double elimination

tournament awards banquet. He is second on the club with a .337 batting average. He also ranks second in the conference with a team-high 14 home runs.

depth," he said. "Our only chance is to stay in the winners' bracket. If we get down in the losers' bracket, we're in trouble." That's what the Toppers did in 2004 when they won their first-ever Sun Belt Conference tournament. That year, they became the first No. 7 seed to win it all. Last year, they became the first eight seed to win a first-round game in the tournament. All that gives the team hope for extending its season.

"We're feeling pretty good, even though we lost a few games lately," Ramsdell said. "We're just inches from putting it all together." Finwood said everyone is available tonight against the Trojans. "I know it's a cliché, but you just have to take it one game at a time," Finwood said. "You just have to worry about winning that first game and then go from there. Everybody is available every game — that's the way you look at it."

Newton was named to the all-Sun Belt second team Tuesday night at the league's annual pre-

TOPPERS, from 1C

Raiders pitcher commits to WKU

By ROB HERBST
The Daily News

AUG 31 2006

rherbst@bgdailynews.com/783-3238

Warren East baseball player Ross Hammonds knows he'll be staying close to home after high school.

The senior pitcher has verbally committed to Western Kentucky and is expected to sign with the Hilltoppers during the November signing period.



ROSS HAMMONDS
Warren East senior

"Western was where I wanted to go to school," Hammonds said. "I wanted to stay in town and am happy I've got the chance to."

Hammonds has been a mainstay for the Raiders since his freshman year.

As a pitcher, Hammonds has 16 varsity wins and owns the school's strikeout record with 196 over 182 innings.

Hammonds also has a career batting average of .346, although Hammonds is expected to primarily be used as a pitcher at Western.

"With (the Western coaches') help and knowledge, he'll be able to learn from them and I think he's going to turn out to be a really good player at the D-I level," East coach Wes Sanford said. "It may take him some time, but he'll end up being a pretty good little pitcher for them."

Hammonds is expected to be the first East baseball player to play at Western since Nathan Isenberg played at WKU from 1997-99.

"It's awesome," Sanford said. "He's worked hard and coaches before have worked hard to get him better as a player. He's put in his time, and from a program standpoint, that's awesome to have someone committed to a Division I program going into his senior year."

Hammonds is most relieved to have his decision over with before taking the mound next year.

But Hammonds didn't feel pressure during his junior campaign. Whenever WKU coaches were at a game, Hammonds wasn't aware of them.

"The funny thing is they don't make themselves noticeable," Hammonds said. "I wouldn't know until after the game that they were there. (Verbally committing takes) a little bit off my shoulders. You always do the best you can but knowing you don't have to impress coaches."

Hammonds originally became acquainted with WKU coach Chris Finwood while attending fall camp last year. Western went 22-30 last year and finished eighth in the Sun Belt Conference.

WKU baseball adds three

The Western Kentucky baseball program announced three Division I pitching transfers on Saturday.

Peter Wiggins is the most experienced of the trio, as he will have one year of eligibility remaining. After spending two years at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Wiggins – a righthander – made 25 appearances in 2006 at Auburn. He compiled a 3-3 record on the year, throwing 43.1 innings and posting a 6.44 earned run average.

Matt Hightower – who just completed his redshirt freshman season at Florida – will also battle for a spot in the starting rotation. The lefty made nine relief appearances with the Gators in 2006, throwing 8.2 innings and averaging almost a strikeout per inning.

Righthander Ben Hildreth rounds out the pitching trio as he joins the Hilltoppers after completing his redshirt freshman season at Winthrop. Hildreth made four starts and 13 appearances out of the bullpen for the Eagles last season, compiling a 3-3 record.

DAILY NEWS, BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY

Oct. 19, 2006

Sports

WKU baseball releases schedule

By the Daily News

The Western Kentucky baseball team will play 32 home games and face eight NCAA Tournament teams from a year ago during its 2007 schedule, which was released today.

"We are really excited about our 2007 schedule as we are playing 12 games against teams that were in the 2006 NCAA Tournament," said second-year Hilltopper coach Chris Finwood. "This is probably the toughest schedule in

WKU history, but it will prepare us well for the always tough Sun Belt Conference. We will continue to play a demanding schedule in the future so that we can attract the type of player who wants to compete against the best."

The Hilltoppers waste no time taking on top competition, opening the season in Wilmington, N.C., against three teams that made the NCAA field a year ago. WKU will open the year against UNC-Wilmington on Feb. 9, then take on South Carolina and Oklahoma

on Feb. 10 and 11. Both the Gamecocks and Sooners reached the 2006 Super Regionals, and were each one victory away from advancing to the College World Series.

WKU will then open a nine-game homestand at Nick Denes Field, which includes weekend series against Miami (Ohio) (Feb. 17-18), Xavier (Feb. 23-25) and Purdue (March 2-4), and a midweek contest against Vanderbilt (March 6).

The Hilltoppers will also return games with two of those teams as they travel to Nashville to take on

the Commodores on March 18, and play their final midweek contest of the year at Purdue on May 15.

Following a game at Louisville on March 7, the Toppers begin Sun Belt Conference play at home against league newcomer Florida Atlantic on March 9-11. That will be the first of five home SBC series on the year as defending league champion Troy (March 30-April 1) Arkansas State (April 13-15), Arkansas-Little Rock (April 27-29) and South Alabama (May 11-13) will also visit Nick Denes Field.



Western set to start season

By OJ STAPLETON
The Daily News
Feb. 9, 2007
ostapleton@dailynews.com/783-3239

Western Kentucky baseball fans better have their scorecards handy when they attend games this season.

Because it's going to be hard to tell just who these guys are without one.

The Hilltoppers open their season today in Wilmington, N.C., with a drastically new lineup. Of the nine starting position players, only one — third baseman Scotty Colt — was on the

roster last year. Casey Hamilton also returns and is penciled in as the team's starting designated hitter.

In the three-man pitching rotation, only senior Liam Shanahan was on the squad in 2006.

"We've got so many new guys, it's almost like we're going to have an evaluation period," WKU coach Chris Finwood said. "I think we'll be hard to scout because nobody knows our players."

The biggest problem last year was on the mound.

Hilltopper pitchers finished the season with a 7.26 ERA with a .328 opposing batting average.

"Let's be blunt — the pitching was terrible last year," Finwood said.

"Outside of Liam, we didn't have a guy that we could count on to give us six solid innings."

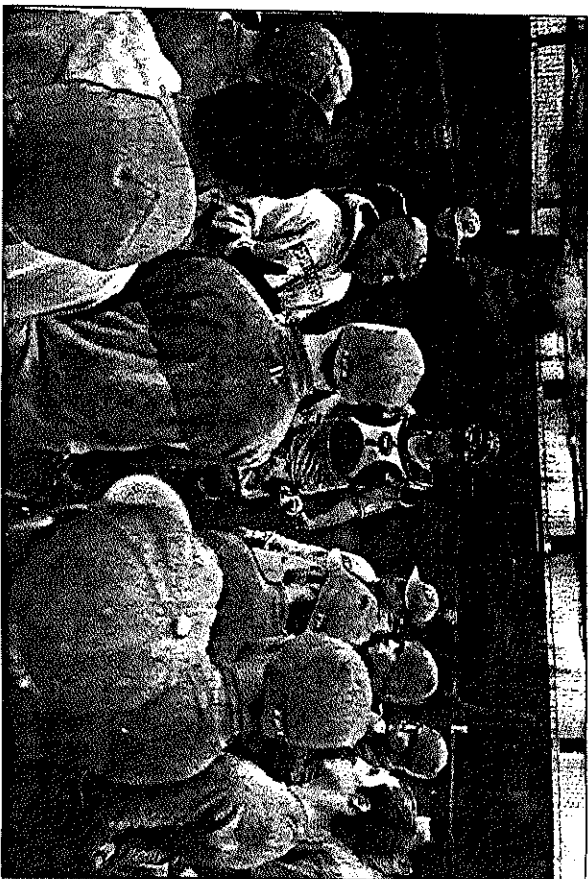
Peter Wiggins, a senior transfer from Auburn, and Matt Ridings, a true freshman from Nashville, will round out the weekend rotation along with Shanahan.

"We've got a good stable of young arms and they'll learn as they go along," Finwood said.

In the field, WKU will start three freshmen — first baseman Jake Wells, second baseman Matt Payton and right fielder Wade Gaynor.

The other positions will be filled by transfers. J.B. Paxson will catch, Terrence Dayleg will start at shortstop

See WESTERN, 3C



WESTERN, from 1C

and Matt Hightower and Scott Kaskie will fill the other two outfield slots.

"We'll be young, but that doesn't mean we won't be competitive, because we are very talented," Finwood said.

With a roster of players he recruited to come to Western, Finwood will be in better shape to play the style of baseball he's accustomed to.

"We've tried to really go after an athletic type of kid that can run and bunt and put pressure on defenses," Finwood said. "I've said all along that's how I want to play offense and we'll be more apt to do that this year."

"From top to bottom, our lineup this year will be much more potent. We've got kids hitting seventh, eighth and ninth that are pretty darn good hitters. That puts a lot of pressure on the opposing pitcher."

Last year Western Kentucky finished the season with a 22-30 record, but was just 5-18 in the Sun Belt Conference.



Western Kentucky sophomore Jack Ambrose warms up Tuesday afternoon at Nick Denes Field. Western opens its season today UNC-Wilmington.

"This year, the team is playing a much tougher nonconference schedule. This weekend the Toppers play UNC-Wilmington, Oklahoma and No. 3 South Carolina — all NCAA Tournament teams last year.

"Although our record was pre-

Joshua McCoy/Daily News

ty good going into Sun Belt play, we really didn't play anybody really tough outside of Kentucky and Vanderbilt," Finwood said. "Our early-season schedule didn't get us ready to play in the Sun Belt and this year it certainly will."

Feb. 10, 2007

WKU Baseball

Tops open with win

**WKU to play No. 4
South Carolina today****By the Daily News**

Scott Kaskie delivered a two-out, two-run home run in the top of the ninth inning Friday to propel Western Kentucky to a season-opening 4-2 win over UNC Wilmington on the first day of the Hughes Bros. Challenge.

The Hilltoppers (1-0) picked up their first win in a season opener since a 4-2 victory at Central Florida in 2003.

"I thought we pitched extremely well and played great defense. I'm really proud of that, considering we haven't been outside much the last couple weeks," Hilltopper coach Chris Finwood said. "We got some big hits when we needed them today, and it was certain-

ly a team effort."

UNCW freshman starter Daniel Cropper held the Hilltoppers down for the first two frames, but ran into some problems in the third as WKU tied things up with an unearned run.

Hilltopper starter Liam Shanahan gave WKU 5.1 solid innings as he allowed just one run on six hits and striking out one UNCW batter. He got a no-decision, however, as the Seahawks were able to tie the game in the bottom of the seventh.

Mark Carver led off the frame with a double off reliever Bart Carter, then came home one out later when Daniel Hargrave produced a run-scoring single to right field, making it a 2-2 game.

After Kaskie's homer in the top

of the ninth, Colby Beach came out of the Hilltopper bullpen and struck out the side to pick up the save.

Carter (1-0) picked up the win in relief as he allowed a run on three hits in 2.2 innings of relief before Beach took over in the ninth.

Offensively, Scotty Colt led the Hilltopper seven-hit attack, going 2-for-4 with two RBI.

WKU will return to action today when it faces No. 4 South Carolina at 3 p.m. (CST) on the second day of the Hughes Bros. Challenge.

All Hilltopper baseball action this season can once again be heard on WBGN 1340 AM. Live stats and streaming audio are also available at wkusports.com



Feb. 11, 2007 Daily News

Topper baseball suffers first loss

South Carolina scored in seven innings Saturday afternoon as the No. 3 Gamecocks picked up a 12-0 win over the Western Kentucky baseball team at Brooks Field in Wilmington, N.C.

The loss dropped the Hilltoppers to 1-1 on the season, while USC improved to 2-0.

Freshman Lonnie Chisenhall led the South Carolina offensive attack as he went 3-for-3 – with two triples and a home run – while driving in four and scoring twice.

The Gamecocks plated six of their runs in the first three innings – all coming with two outs. After scoring one run in each of the first two innings, South Carolina exploded for four two-out runs in the top of the third.

The Hilltoppers picked up just four hits against four USC pitchers.

WKU will look to rebound and post a winning weekend as they play Oklahoma at 9:30 a.m. (CST) today. The Sooners (2-3) fell 13-2 to South Carolina in their first game of the weekend, but rebounded with a 10-5 victory over UNC-Wilmington in Saturday's first game.

Feb. 12, 2007

WKU baseball off to winning start

By the Daily News

Two big innings combined with eight shutout frames from the pitching staff led the Western Kentucky baseball team to an 11-5 win Sunday over Oklahoma in Wilmington, N.C.

The win gave the Toppers a 2-1 start to the season after the opening weekend, while the Sooners fell to 2-4 on the year.

"I'm really proud of how our guys bounced back after yesterday's loss. We played a great game today," WKU coach Chris Finwood said. "We put some good swings on the ball today – especially in those two big innings – and once again played a lot of young guys that did a great job for us."

A bulk of the Hilltopper offense came in the sixth as they sent 12 men to the plate and scored seven runs. After a Matt Payton single started the inning, Casey Hamilton homered to right-center – his first of the season – for the first two runs of the game. After J.B. Paxson reached on a throwing error, Wade Gaynor singled to put runners at the corners. One out later, Scott Kaskie walked to load the bases. Troy Frazier then delivered a bases-clearing double to the gap that gave WKU a 5-0 lead.

Oklahoma appeared to be out of the inning when reliever Nich Conaway struck out Payton, but the ball got away as Payton was safe on first to keep the inning alive. Terrence Dayleg then delivered a two-RBI double to close out the frame as the Toppers opened up a 7-0 lead.

Freshman starter Matt Ridings (1-0) blanked the Sooners over

five-plus innings, allowing just three hits and striking out a pair. After being spotted seven runs, Ridings allowed two OU hits to open up the bottom of the sixth.

The Hilltoppers play 13 of their next 14 games at home, beginning this weekend with a three-game series against Miami of Ohio.

The first game between WKU and the Redhawks is at 2 p.m. Friday.



Softball wins first tourney

The Western Kentucky softball team knocked off home-standing No. 22 South Florida 4-3 on Sunday to win the season-opening Best Western Tournament.

With the score 3-2 in favor of USF, the Hilltoppers received RBI from Alana Towns and Ashley Contreras in the fifth. Towns, single to left plated Lindsay Antone, who led off with an infield single. When Contreras popped a sacrifice fly to center, Renikka Toliver came around to make the count 4-3.

WKU (3-2) put up one run in both the third and fourth innings. Kelsey McCauley led off the third with a double to centerfield and scored on Sam Cronk's sacrifice fly. Contreras picked up an extra base after her lead-off single up the middle in the fourth, advanced to third on Rebecca Horesky's bunt, and touched the plate on Shannon Smith's ground out.

The Hilltoppers travel Friday to the Georgia Softball Classic in Athens, Ga. WKU plays Winthrop at 11 a.m. (CST).

Bowling Green area has played havoc with the scheduled series with Miami (Ohio).

The series between the Hilltoppers and RedHawks was called off, including today's game, as a result.

WKU is off until Friday when it hosts Xavier in a three-game weekend series at Nick Denes

Baseball cancelled

The winter weather in the Field.

Feb. 19, 2007 Daily News

WKU pitcher honored by Sun Belt

By the Daily News

For the second time in three weeks, a Western Kentucky freshman pitcher has been named the Sun Belt Conference Pitcher of the Week.

After Matt Ridings took the honor following the first week of the season, rookie lefty Bart Carter won the award Tuesday.

In his first collegiate start,

Carter blanked Xavier on five hits over six innings of work in the first game of Sunday's doubleheader en route to his second victory of the season.

He allowed no extra-base hits in the outing, striking out seven Xavier batters and walking just one.

The Franklin, Ind., native combined with Steve Hupper on

the first shutout by the Hilltoppers since a 1-0 victory over Ole Miss in the 2004 NCAA Regionals.

This marks the first time since 2003 that two Hilltopper hurlers have been named SBC Pitchers of the Week in the same season, and the first time ever that a pair of WKU rookies has been honored.

Feb. 28, 2007

WKU Sports

Mar. 3, 2007

WKU baseball team drops game to Purdue

By the Daily News

A five-run fourth inning pushed the Purdue Boilermakers to a 10-6 victory over the Western Kentucky baseball team on Friday afternoon at Nick Denes Field.

The Hilltoppers' record dropped to 5-2 on the year as the Boilermakers improved to 2-2.

The fourth inning was capped off after Purdue's Spencer Ingaldson doubled to right center, scoring two Boilermaker runs,

and later scored on a passed ball. Purdue scored five runs in the inning to go ahead 8-2.

WKU tried to cut the gap at the end by scoring four runs in the final three innings. Terrence Dayleg singled up the middle in the seventh to score Matt Hightower and cut the lead to 10-3.

The Hilltoppers added two more runs in the ninth when Casey Hamilton singled to score Jack Ambrose and Matt Payton. The Boilermakers scored first

in the game after a leadoff triple in the second inning from John Cummins, who later scored on a single from Jon Moore.

Purdue went up 2-0 in the third due to a solo homer by Jordan Comadena and pushed the lead to three runs on a double to center field from Ryne White scoring Ingaldson.

WKU closed the gap to one run in the third when Hamilton hit an RBI fielder's choice to score Payton. Scotty Colt then

singled to left field to plate Hightower.

Liam Shanahan (0-1) suffered the loss after giving up six runs in just over three innings of work. Hamilton led the charge for WKU going 2-for-5 and hitting in three runners. Payton and Hightower each went 2-for-4 and scored two runs.

Josh Lindblom (1-1) went seven innings for the win, while only giving up three runs and striking out seven. Ingaldson hit a

perfect 5-for-5 from the plate, adding three runs and two RBI.

The second game of the three game set between WKU and Purdue will start at 2 p.m. today.

WKU baseball team falls to Purdue 12-5

By the Daily News

Purdue scored three runs in three different innings to defeat Western Kentucky 12-5 on Saturday in the second of a three-game series at Nick Denes Field.

Purdue (3-2) finished off WKU in the sixth after a three-run inning to go ahead 9-2. The Boilermakers added three more runs in the seventh frame to make the gap 12-2.

The game got off to a rough start for WKU as Purdue saw its first nine batters come to the plate in the first inning. The Boilermakers scored three runs in the first off Hilltopper starting pitcher Bart Carter, who took the loss in just 3.2 innings of work. Carter gave up six runs, falling to 2-1 on the season.

Jake Wells put the Toppers on the scoreboard in the bottom half

of the fourth after an RBI single to right scored Scotty Colt.

WKU (5-3) cut the lead to 6-2 after an error by the Purdue second baseman let J.B. Paxson score from third.

The Hilltoppers got more offense in the eighth when Troy Frazier doubled in Wade Gaynor. Scott Kaskie followed with a triple Frazier. The Toppers got Kaskie home on a Matt Payton fielder's choice later in the inning.

Purdue's Ricky Heines (2-0) pitched six innings for the victory, striking out seven batters, and only allowing one earned run. Ryan White was a perfect 3-for-3 with three runs scored and two RBI.

The final game of the series will begin at 1 p.m. (CST) today at Nick Denes Field.

stayed undefeated at 15-0.

WKU tried to win the ballgame in the ninth, but the third out came as the tying run stayed at second base. The Hilltoppers came into the inning down 6-2, but a Wade Gaynor walk with the bases loaded allowed Matt Hilltopper to cut the lead to three runs. Matt Payton then reached on a fielder's choice, letting Troy Frazier score.

Chad Adcock (0-1) took the loss in one inning of relief, giving up one run. Casey Hamilton and Terrence Dayleg both went 2-for-4.

Mike Minor (2-0) went 5.2 innings, giving up two runs, while striking out seven Hilltopper batters.

The Toppers head to Louisville today to face the Cardinals at 3 p.m. (CST).

WKU baseball falls to top-ranked Vandy

Mar. 7, 2007

The Western Kentucky baseball team fell 6-4 on Tuesday to Vanderbilt at Nick Denes Field.

The Hilltoppers dropped to 5-5 on the year as the Commodores

Daily News

Western drops Sun Belt opener

Mar. 10, 2007

By the Daily News

A 10-run eighth inning by Florida Atlantic broke open the game as the Owls picked up a 13-3 Sun Belt Conference win over Western Kentucky on Friday night at Nick Denes Field.

The loss was the sixth straight for WKU as it fell to 5-7 and 0-1 in the Sun Belt, while the Owls improved to 14-3 and 1-0 in the league.

The teams will continue the three-game weekend series with a 3 p.m. game today.

FAU sent 14 men to the plate in the eighth as it lead just 2-1 entering the frame. 11 straight Owls reached base in the inning as the Owls opened up a 12-1 lead.

The Owls added a 13th run in the ninth when a Justin Ferreira double scored William Block. WKU was able to put a pair of runs on the board in its final at bat when a Tyler Bunnagamer single drove home J.B. Paxson and

Scott Kaskie to make it a 10-run game before the final out.

Before the big inning, pitching dominated as both WKU starter Liam Shanahan and Owl hurler Mike Obradovich kept their teams in the game.

FAU struck first, however, as a Block solo home run in the third. However, the Toppers responded in the bottom of the inning as Casey Hamilton hit a homer of his own to knot things up at 1-1.

Shanahan (0-2) suffered the loss despite allowing just two runs on six hits over 5.2/3 innings of work. He also struck out four FAU batters in the start. Obradovich (4-0) picked up the win as he limited WKU to just one run on seven hits, with eight strikeouts over seven innings.

Offensively, Hamilton led the way with three hits, while Scotty Colt collected two hits for the Hilltoppers. McKenna paced FAU with a 3-for-5 effort.



Toppers rally for first Sun Belt win

By the Daily News

In a game that saw a total of 26 hits and 10 errors, Western Kentucky posted three runs in the bottom of the ninth to pull out a 12-11 Sun Belt win over Florida Atlantic on Saturday at Nick Denes Field.

The victory snapped a six-game losing skid for the Hilltoppers as they improved to 6-7 overall and 1-1 in the Sun Belt. FAU fell to 14-4 and 1-1 in the league.

The teams will now play the rubber match of the series today at noon — up one hour from the scheduled start time to help accommodate FAU's travel plans.

Trailing 11-9 entering the bottom of the ninth, three FAU miscues produced two runs to tie the game at 11-11. With Jack Ambrose on first with no outs, Adam Duvall drew a walk and Scott Kaskie was

hit by a pitch to load the bases.

FAU reliever Chris Salsberg was able to strike out Terrence Dayleg for the first out of the inning, but Casey Hamilton reached on a fielder's choice as he beat out a potential double-play ball, allowing Ambrose to score the winning run.

"I'm really proud of our kids for continuing to battle to the very end," Hilltopper coach Chris Finwood said. "It was by no means a pretty game, but we never gave up. This was a much-needed victory for us today."

WKU collected 10 hits in the contest, with Dayleg collecting a season-high three hits to lead the way.

Colby Beach (1-0) picked up the victory in relief as he recorded six strikeouts over the final three innings.



Western baseball opens series at FIU with loss

Mar. 17, 2007

By the Daily News

MIAMI — Jorge Ramos threw a complete game to lead Florida International to a 5-2 victory Friday evening over Western Kentucky in the opening game of a Sun Belt Conference weekend series.

The Hilltoppers (6-9, 1-3 SBC) got on the board early as Scott Kaskie led off the game with a double and came home to score on a Casey Hamilton single for the first run of the game. WKU had another scoring opportunity in the second, putting runners at second and third with just

one out, but Ramos was able to pick up a strikeout and a ground out to squander the potential rally.

The Toppers were able to stretch the lead out in the fourth as a Matt Hightower single brought home Scotty Colt to give the Hilltoppers a 2-0 advantage.

WKU starter Liam Shanahan blanked the Golden Panthers (13-9, 1-0 SBC) over the first four innings, but ran into trouble in the fifth as FIU took the lead. After back-to-back singles to start the inning, a one-out base

hit by Corey Lozano plated the first FIU run of the game. A Hilltopper error on the play allowed another runner to score, tying the game as Lozano advanced to third.

Bryan Pullin followed with a run-scoring single of his own to plate the eventual game-winning run.

A two-out home run by Luis Batista in the sixth gave the Panthers a two-run lead, and another unearned run in the eighth put Florida International in front 5-2.

Ramos allowed 10 hits and

struck out six WKU batters as he improved to 3-3 on the year. Shanahan (0-3) suffered the loss as he allowed four runs on nine hits, and struck out a pair in 5-2/3 innings of work.

Wade Gaynor and Hightower each had two hits to lead the Hilltopper offense. Rainy Fuenes went 3-for-4 to lead FIU, with Batista and Tyler Townsend each picking up a pair of hits.

The Hilltoppers will look to even up the series tomorrow when they battle Florida International at noon (CDT).

Mar. 18, 2007

Hilltopper baseball team holds off FIU, 6-5

By the Daily News

Terrence Dayleg finished with two hits and a career-high four RBI to lead the Western Kentucky baseball team to a 6-5 victory over Florida International Saturday afternoon in Miami.

The win by the Hilltoppers evened the Sun Belt Conference weekend series at one game apiece.

WKU moved to 7-9 overall and 2-3 in the league, while FIU dropped to 13-10 and 1-1 in the SBC.

The teams will play the rubber match of the series at 11 a.m. today.

For the second day in a row, the Hilltoppers struck first as J.B. Paxson led off the third inning with a double, then moved to third on a Matt Payton sacrifice bunt. After Scott Kaskie was hit by a pitch to put runners at the corners, Dayleg batted from a 0-2 hole to deliver a sacrifice fly that scored Paxson with the game's first run.

The top of the WKU lineup put it back in front in the fifth as Kaskie set the stage with a one-out single. Dayleg followed with an RBI double to bring home Kaskie, then came around to

score on a Casey Hamilton single to give the Toppers a 3-1 lead and end the day for FIU starter Chris Allen. However, just as it did in the third inning, FIU responded in the bottom of the with a two-out run. After James McOwen delivered a single and stole second, John Petika singled to drive in McOwen and make it a one-run game.

Dayleg delivered again in the sixth when his second double of the game plated both Paxson and Payton to stretch the Hilltopper

lead to 5-2. One inning later, three consecutive two-out walks to Matt Hightower, Paxson and Payton forced home the sixth WKU run of the afternoon as Jack Ambrose walked in to stretch the advantage to four runs.

Florida International put the tying run on base when Tyler Townsend came through with a one-out single. However, Steve Hupper was able to get a fly out for the second out, then picked off pinch runner Brian Adams at first to end the game and record

his second save of the season.

Bart Carter (3-1) picked up the win in relief of Ridings, who allowed two runs on four hits while striking out three in his 4½-inning start. Carter, Ben Hildreth, Beach and Hupper preserved the lead over the final 4½ innings. Allen (1-2) suffered the loss for FIU as he surrendered three runs on eight hits over 4½ innings of work.

Hamilton and Ambrose each collected three hits to lead the WKU 12-hit attack.

Western baseball falls in opener to Albany

By the Daily News

A six-run sixth inning by Albany answered a six-spot by the Western Kentucky University baseball team an inning early, and helped propel the Great Danes to a 12-8 win Friday evening at Nick Denes Field in the opener of a three-game series.

After falling behind 2-1 going into the bottom of the fourth, the Hilltoppers (8-12) sent 10 men to the plate and scored six runs to pull out to a five-run lead. Seven

of the first eight Hilltoppers to bat in the frame reached first, with Casey Hamilton and Scott Kaskie each driving in two runs.

The advantage would be short-lived, however, as Albany (5-9) got a Tom Hill solo home run in the fifth before putting together a six-run inning of its own in the sixth.

The Great Danes sent 11 men to the plate in frame, but only produced three hits as they took advantage of four walks by

Hilltopper pitching to put together the rally.

WKU made it a 9-8 game in the bottom of the inning when Wade Gaynor led off with a double and scored on a Matt Payton fielder's choice.

Albany came right back with two runs in the top of the eighth to stretch the advantage out to 11-8, and then added a run in the top of the ninth thanks to a bases-loaded walk.

Alexander Beaulieu shut out

the Hilltoppers over the final two innings to earn his second save of the year. Sean Gregory (1-1) got the victory in relief, while WKU used nine pitchers in the contest as Ben Hildreth (0-1) took the loss.

Hamilton finished with three hits and a pair of RBI to lead the Hilltoppers, while Leo Corvino and Hill each had three hits for Albany.

The teams will continue their series at 3 p.m. today, with the

weekend finale slated for 1 p.m. Sunday.

Basketball banquet scheduled
The Western Kentucky basketball program's annual postseason banquet is April 10.

The event begins at 6 p.m. on the main floor of E.A. Diddle Arena.

Hilltopper head coach Darrin Horn and his staff will hand out individual awards and recognize accomplishments of this year's

squad.
WKU basketball fans are invited to attend for \$20 a person with children eight or under getting in for \$15. A table of eight seats is \$150.

— For more information or to reserve seats, contact the basketball office at 745-2131 or e-mail administrative assistant Christina Harmon at christina.harmon@wku.edu. The deadline to make reservations is April 6.

PAGE 6B - SUNDAY, MARCH 25, 2007

Hilltoppers score 21 in win over Albany

By the Daily News

An eight-run first inning was pretty much all the offense Western Kentucky's baseball team needed Saturday — although they scored a season-high 21 runs and 23 hits in a 21-8 win over Albany at Nick Denes Field.

The win by WKU (9-12) evened the weekend series with the Great Danes (5-10). The teams will play the rubber game and finale today at 1 p.m.

Wade Gaynor had a career day for the Hilltoppers, collect-

ing a career-high five hits. Scott Kaskie also had a big afternoon with the bat, driving in four runs as three other Hilltoppers (Terrence Dayleg, Matt Hightower and C.J. Wamsley) each collected three hits.

Western starting pitcher Bart Carter threw six innings to secure the win, allowing six hits and two runs while striking out four batters.

Albany starter John Naples (2-2) didn't last long, leaving the game after just two outs, as he was responsible for eight earned runs.



WKU baseball loses to Vanderbilt

By the Daily News

Top-ranked Vanderbilt scored 15 unanswered runs — including 12 in the first three innings — to pick up a 15-2 win over the Western Kentucky University baseball team Tuesday evening at Hawkins Field.

The Hilltoppers (8-10) drew first blood as a Scotty Colt RBI single and Jake Wells sacrifice fly plated two runs in the top of the first to put WKU in front.

After allowing two straight hits to start the bottom of the first, WKU starter Liam Shana-

han appeared to be out of a jam when he got Pedro Alvarez to ground into a double play. However, five straight Commodores reached after that and Vanderbilt sprinted in front 4-2.

Alvarez accounted for two more runs in the second as he hit a two-run home run to right-center.

The Commodores (22-1) were able to blow things open in the third by taking advantage of three Hilltopper errors in the

inning and sending 12 men to the plate, scoring six unearned runs to push the lead to 12-2.

The only other Hilltopper threat came in the second inning when VU starter Ty Davis walked the bases loaded. Reliever Mike Minor (3-0) came in to get a ground out that ended the threat.

Minor went on to throw 3.1 innings of scoreless relief, allowing two hits and striking out six to earn the victory.

The Commodores added single runs in the fourth, sixth and seventh innings to stretch their lead to the final margin of 13 runs.

WKU collected six hits in the ball game, while Dominic de la Osa and Ryan Davis paced Vanderbilt with three hits each.

Shanahan (0-4) suffered the loss, allowing five earned runs on seven hits in 1.2 inning of work.

The Hilltoppers are back on the road tonight at Kentucky for a 5:30 p.m. game in Lexington.



UK beats Western

Mar. 22, 2007

By the Daily News

The Western Kentucky baseball team fell to 11th-ranked Kentucky on Wednesday in Lexington.

The Wildcats used a six-run seventh to get the 12-5 win over the Hilltoppers at Cliff Hagan Stadium.

WKU (8-11) led 5-4 before two runs by the Wildcats (22-2) in the bottom of the fifth gave them a one-run lead. That score held until the seventh, when UK sent 10 men to the plate and scored six times to blow the game open.

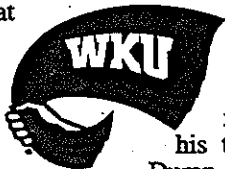
The Toppers collected 10 hits in the game, with Scott Kaskie,

Terrence Dayleg, Troy Frazier and Wade Gaynor accounting for two hits each.

Peter Wiggins (0-2) suffered the loss as he allowed two runs on no hits while walking three batters in his one inning of relief. Matt Hightower got the start on the mound for WKU, allowing four runs on five hits over his three innings of work.

Duran Ferguson (3-0) got the win in relief for UK.

WKU will look to break its two-game losing skid the weekend when it hosts Albany in a three-game nonconference series at Nick Denes Field beginning Friday.



Western Kentucky baseball team drops series

By the Daily News

Albany's Casey Walsh and Sean Gregory combined to limit the Western Kentucky baseball team to six hits Sunday in leading their team to a 7-0 win over the Hilltoppers at Nick Denes Field.

The Great Danes improved to 5-10 on the season after taking two of three games from the Hilltoppers (9-13) over the weekend.

Walsh scattered four hits and three walks in six innings, stranding eight and pitching out of a bases-loaded jam in the bottom of the sixth.

Casey Hamilton walked and

Scotty Colt followed with a single up the middle to start the frame, and after Walsh recorded a pair of outs, Matt Hightower kept the inning alive with a base hit through the right side of the infield. But, the right-hander induced a groundout to end the Hilltoppers' first threat of the day.

Gregory earned his first save of the season after striking out three while surrendering two hits over the final three innings. That included stranding a pair of runners in his first frame after Terrence Dayleg and Hamilton reached on two-out singles.

Al Barbato and Tom Hill had two hit apiece to pace the Great Danes as every Albany starter reached base at least once.

Hamilton was 2-for-3 to pace the WKU offense.

The Hilltoppers return to action Wednesday when they visit Belmont in Nashville.

Mar. 26, 2007

Mar. 31, 2007

Toppers take series opener from Sun Belt rival

By The Daily News

Liam Shanahan gave the Western Kentucky University baseball team seven strong innings, and the offense responded as the Hilltoppers picked up a 14-5 win over Troy on Friday at Nick Denes Field in the opener of a three-game Sun Belt Conference weekend series.

The win moved the Hilltoppers to 10-13 and 4-3 in the Sun Belt, while Troy fell to 16-11 and 6-4 in the league.

"This may have been our best performance of the season, and

I'm really proud of the way our guys came out and just played hard tonight," WKU head coach Chris Finwood said. "Liam pitched his best game of the season, and really did a great job for us on the mound."

After Troy played an unearned run in the top of the first, the Hilltoppers sent nine men to the plate in the bottom of the inning of Troy starter Clegg Snipes.

Scott Kaskie led off the inning with a single, and came home to score on a one-out double by Casey Hamilton.

After a walk to Scotty Colt and base hit by Matt Hightower loaded the bases, Troy Frazier was hit by a pitch to force home the second WKU run of the inning.

A Wade Gaynor bloop single brought home Colt to make it 3-1, and C.J. Wamsley delivered a sacrifice fly to plate the fourth and final WKU run of the inning.

Snipes (2-3) lasted just the one inning for Troy.

Hamilton stretched the lead to 6-1 with a two-run homer in the bottom of the second, and — after Troy scored a run in the top of the

third — WKU batted around again in the bottom of the inning to blow things open.

The Toppers loaded the bases with one out against Trojan reliever Neal Jordan before Kaskie brought home a pair with a double. Nate Duhe came in to relieve Jordan as was greeted by Terrence Dayleg who hit a three-run home run to left-center, stretching the WKU lead to 11-2.

Troy got a pair in the fourth thanks to a Brett Henry sacrifice fly and Rob Brown RBI single to make it 11-4, but that would be the

last runs allowed by Hilltopper starter Shanahan.

Shanahan (1-5) went 7.0 innings to get the victory as he scattered seven hits and allowed four runs — three of which were earned — while striking out six Troy batters.

The Hilltoppers would add some insurance a Hamilton doubled and scored in a wild pitch in the sixth, and Gaynor led off the seventh with his first career home run to stretch the advantage to 13-4.

The Trojans got a run back in

the eighth when a Clint Robinson single off of reliever Colby Beach scored Edgar Ramirez to make it a 13-5 game. However, Gaynor came through with a two-out RBI single in the bottom of the inning to stretch the lead back to nine runs. J.B. Paxson came out off the bullpen in the ninth and blanked to Trojans to seal the victory for WKU.

Offensively, Hamilton led the way going 4-for-4 with three RBI and three runs scored, while Gaynor went 4-for-5 with three runs driven in.

WKU holds off Belmont

By the Daily News

Scotty Colt's RBI single in the bottom of the eighth helped the Western Kentucky University baseball team fight off a late charge by Belmont and pick up a 6-5 win on Tuesday at Nick Denes Field.

The win moved WKU to 13-16 on the year, while Belmont fell to 18-13.

"This was another good win for us against a solid ballclub," Hilltopper head coach Chris Finwood said. "We had our chances to break it open early, but I'm proud of the way we executed

when we needed to tonight."

WKU starter Matt Hightower went six innings and allowed just three runs on six hits, while striking out six Bruin batters.

Colby Beach allowed one hit in 1 2/3 innings to pick up the victory.

Scott Kaskie, Terrence Dayleg, Wade Gaynor and Colt finished with two hits each for WKU, while Dayleg posted a game-high three RBIs.

The Toppers will be back in action tonight when they host Eastern Kentucky at 6 p.m.

Apr. 11, 2007

WKU baseball loses final game of series

By the Daily News
Apr. 2, 2007

2 games in the Sun Belt – especially on Sundays. I'm really proud of the way our guys competed all weekend. I feel like we really turned a corner with our performance in this series."

Bart Carter (4-2) suffered the

loss despite allowing just three runs on six hits over 5-1/3 innings of work.

Offensively, Scott Kaskie led the way for the Toppers with two hits.

Western will return to action on Tuesday at Austin Peay.

Troy (17-12, 7-5 Sun Belt Conference) starter Tim Wheeler and reliever Josh Dew combined to shut out the Western Kentucky (11-14, 5-4 Sun Belt Conference) over the final eight innings.

"Today was just a great baseball game," WKU coach Chris Finwood. "You don't see many 4-

WKU evens baseball series with Arkansas State

APR 15 2007

By the Daily News

Freshman starter Matt Ridings threw a complete-game three hit-ter - the first complete game of his career - and the offense again scored in double figures as the Western Kentucky baseball team evened its weekend Sun Belt Conference series against Arkansas State with a 10-3 win over the Indians on Saturday evening at Nick Denes Field.

The win moved WKU to 15-17 on the year and 7-7 in the conference, while ASU fell to 15-23 and 7-10 in the league. The teams play the rubber game of the

series at 1 p.m. today.

Ridings - whose previous long outing was 6-1/3 innings against Troy in late March - improved to 4-1 on the year and 2-0 against Sun Belt competition. He struck out seven Indians, which tied his career best.

After dropping game one of the series earlier in the day in the completion of Friday night's suspended contest, WKU wasted little time putting runs on the board as it played four in the bottom of the first inning, sending nine men to the plate.

Troy Frazier hit his third home

run of the season off Indian starter Jett Jones to make it 2-0, and the inning was kept alive by back-to-back ASU errors as both Scotty Colt and Wade Gaynor reached. A Jack Ambrose single, followed by a J.B. Paxson RBI double, capped off the inning as WKU jumped out to an early 4-0 lead.

Run-scoring singles by Matt Hamilton and Colt in fourth inning stretched the lead to 8-1, and an infield single by Kaskie in the fifth plated Matt Hightower for the ninth WKU run of the

game.

Hightower put WKU in double figures in the bottom of the seventh when he led off with his third home run of the year to make it a 10-3 game.

That would be all the support Ridings would need as closed out the game, throwing 118 pitches in the victory.

Terrance Dayleg, Frazier, Colt, Hightower and Paxson each had two hits for WKU, with Hamilton driving in a pair.

Miscues costly in Western's loss to Louisville

By the Daily News

The Western Kentucky baseball team committed four errors Tuesday and saw Louisville use a five-run seventh inning to pull away and pick up a 14-3 win over the Hilltoppers at Nick Denes Field.

Leading 7-3, Louisville (25-11) sent nine men to the plate in the seventh inning, scoring seven times to break the game open.

Tyler Bungamer collected two hits for WKU, while Scotty Colt extended his hitting streak to 11 games with a fourth-inning single.

The first five runs of the game were unnamed as Jorge Castillo got U of L on the board with a

two-run single in the first. A Cardinal error in the bottom of the second led to a pair of WKU runs as Wade Gaynor and Adam Duvall each produced RBI singles to tie the game at 2-2.

The Cards quickly regained the lead in the third on a Logan Johnson double. Louisville put three runs on the board in the fourth to stretch the lead. Warren Central graduate Derrick Alfonso doubled down the line in right to knock in the first run of the

inning and Cates later singled in a run and scored.

WKU was able to get a run back in the fifth when Bungamer doubled home Scott Kaskie, but the Hilltoppers got no closer.

WKU starter Matt Hightower (0-2) suffered the loss, going five innings, allowing six runs (two earned) on five hits and striking out six.

The Toppers (15-19) are in action this weekend on the road for a three-game Sun Belt Conference series at Louisiana-Monroe.

APR 18 2007

from Hilltoppers

Arkansas State takes series

By the Daily News

Apr 16, 2007

Despite a late rally, the Western Kentucky baseball team dropped the finale of a three-game Sun Belt Conference series to Arkansas State 6-4 Sunday at Nick Denes Field.

WKU dropped two of three to the Indians on the weekend as it fell to 15-18 overall and 7-8 in Sun Belt game.

ASU improved to 16-23 and 8-10 in the league.

Both WKU starter Bart Carter and Arkansas State hurler T.J. Brewer kept the bats quiet in the early stages of the game. The only

Hilltopper run off Brewer came with two outs in the third when Terrence Dayleg homered over the wall in left-center to put WKU in front 1-0.

Carter was equally impressive as he blanked ASU until the fifth when Drew Rogers led off the inning with a double, and came around later in the frame to score on an Aaron Ferguson sacrifice fly.

Brandon Eller gave the Indians the lead an inning later with a leadoff home run, and a Guy Brown RBI single off reliever Colby Beach stretched the ASU

lead to 3-1.

Arkansas State added two runs in the seventh before the Toppers threatened in the bottom of the inning – loading the bases with just one out.

ASU reliever Nick Lambert was able to get Casey Hamilton to pop up before Troy Frazier grounded into a fielder's choice to end the inning and keep it a four-run game.

The Indians added an unearned run in the eighth and WKU scored three times in the bottom of the inning, but were unable to get closer.

The Hilltoppers outlit Arkansas State 13-10 in the game, with Casey Hamilton and Matt Hightower each collecting three hits. Dayleg also picked up a pair of hits for WKU.

WKU is back in action at 6 p.m. Tuesday when it hosts Louisville at Nick Denes Field to wrap up a six-game homestand.

APR 23 2007

Western baseball falls to Louisiana-Monroe

By The Daily News

Louisiana Monroe rallied for six runs in the eighth inning and held on for a 7-4 victory Sunday over visiting Western Kentucky in the Sun Belt series finale.

The loss dropped WKU to 16-21 overall and 8-10 in the Sun Belt, while ULM improved to 25-17 and 13-7 in the league.

The Hilltoppers held a 3-1 lead entering the bottom of the eighth but the Warhawks put two on with two out against reliever Colby Beach.

Dexter Fontenot kept the inning

alive as he reached on a Hilltopper error to load the bases, and A.J. Siggers made it a one-run game with an infield single.

Ben Soignier gave ULM its first lead of the game with a two-run single, and Ty Rollinson delivered the big blow of the inning - a three-run pinch-hit home run to left to make it a 7-3 game.

WKU's Matt Hightower led off the ninth with a single. One out later, a single from J.B. Paxson put runners at first and second. Scott Kaskie singled with two outs - scoring Hightower, but Kyle

Smith came out of the bullpen and got Terrence Dayleg to ground into a fielder's choice to end the game.

Beach (3-2) suffered the loss as he allowed six unearned runs on three hits in 1 2/3 innings of relief, while Jared Jennings (4-1) earned the win in relief for ULM.

Bart Carter got a no decision despite allowing just one unearned run on three hits over 6 1/3 innings.

Offensively, Kaskie and Dayleg each had two hits, with Dayleg driving home a team-high two runs.

WKU returns home Tuesday when it hosts Austin Peay in a nonconference game at 6 p.m. at Nick Denes Field.

Baseball falls to ULM

A nine-run fifth inning by Louisiana-Monroe erased a 7-3 lead by the Western Kentucky University baseball team, and lifted the Warhawks to a 13-7 win Friday night in the opener of a three-game Sun Belt Conference series at Warhawk Field.

The loss was the third straight for WKU as it fell to 15-20 overall and 7-9 in the Sun Belt. ULM improved to 24-16 and 12-6 in the league.

Gaynor and Wansley each fin-

ished with two hits and two RBI for the Hilltoppers, while Suire and Siggers each collected three hits for ULM. Suire also drove home five of the Warhawks' 13 runs.

Jennings (3-1) picked up the win in relief as he allowed WKU just one hit in 2.2 innings of relief. In fact, WKU was limited to just one hit after its five-run fifth inning. Colby Beach (3-1) suffered the loss in relief for the Hilltoppers.

The teams continued the series on Saturday in a game that didn't finish before press time.

Daily News

APR 22 2007

Austin Peay knocks off Western Kentucky

By the Daily News

Two unearned runs by Austin Peay in the seventh inning proved to be the difference as the Governors picked up a 6-5 win over the Western Kentucky baseball team Tuesday evening at Nick Denes Field.

The loss dropped the Hilltoppers to 16-22 heading into a 2 p.m. game today at Eastern Kentucky.

APSU improved to 23-17 with the victory.

"This was a good midweek game. I felt both teams pitched really well," Hilltopper head coach Chris Finwood said. "I felt we played well, but right now we are just struggling getting the big hit when we need it."

With WKU leading 5-4 entering, reliever Peter Wiggins (0-2) ran into some trouble in the seventh as Jake Lane led off with a single and J.B. Gilbert drew a walk to put the tying run in scoring position.

Josh Kempf then laid down a

sacrifice bunt, but the throw to first was wide as Lane scored to tie the game at 5-5.

One out later, an RBI ground-out by Jacob Crass plated Gilbert to put Austin Peay back in front 6-5.

That would be all the run support the Governor bullpen would need. Michael Dunn and David Vicini blanked the Toppers over the final four innings, with Dunn (2-0) picking up the win and Vicini earning his first save of the season.

The Hilltoppers threatened in the bottom of the ninth — Tyler Bumgarner singled with one out, and moved into scoring position on a Troy Frazier groundout. Scott Kaskie was hit by a pitch to put the potential winning run on first, but Vicini got Casey Hamilton to ground into a fielder's choice to end the game.

Kaskie and Frazier led WKU with two hits each, while Jack Ambrose and J.B. Paxson finished with a pair of RBI.

SATURDAY, APRIL 28, 2007 - PAGE 3B

Hilltoppers end three-game skid

By the Daily News

Western Kentucky University freshman starter Bart Carter threw a complete-game, three-hit shutout, leading the Hilltoppers to a 3-0 win over Arkansas-Little Rock in the opener of a three-game Sun Belt Conference series Friday at Nick Denes Field.

The win ended a three-game losing skid for the Hilltoppers, who improved to 17-23 overall and 9-10 in the Sun Belt. UALR fell to 17-24 and 5-13 in the league.

"This was just an old-fashioned baseball game. You don't see too many two-hour games in college baseball anymore," Hilltopper head coach Chris Finwood said. "Bart was outstanding again tonight and gave us the kind of momentum we needed heading in the rest of the weekend. We did just enough offensively, and good pitching always gives you a chance to win."

It was the first complete game of Carter's career as he improved to 5-3 on the year. The rookie left-hander retired UALR in order in five of his nine innings, allowing just three singles and tying a career high with seven strikeouts.

Trojan starter David Klumpp (3-4) was equally as impressive

as he threw 7.2 innings, allowing three runs on seven hits, and striking out seven.

After three scoreless innings, WKU was finally able to get in the board in the fourth inning, putting together a two-out rally when Casey Hamilton was hit by a pitch, and Scotty Colt drew a walk. Wade Gaynor followed with a single through the left side that plated Hamilton from second, giving the Toppers a 1-0 lead.

A leadoff double by Scotty Colt set up another scoring inning for WKU in the seventh. Following the two-bagger, Gaynor laid down a sacrifice bunt that was thrown away by UALR third baseman Brian Smiley, allowing Colt to score and stretch the lead to two runs. A Troy Frazier infield single later in the inning stretched the lead to 3-0.

The Trojans did not threaten against Carter until the eighth, when a pair of two-out walks gave UALR its first runner in scoring position.

After a wild pitch allowed the runners to move to second and third, Carter got Brian Asbill to ground out, ending the threat. Carter then retired UALR in order in the ninth.

The two teams will continue their series at 3 p.m. today.

Western baseball falls to instate rival Eastern

By the Daily News

The Eastern Kentucky baseball team scored multiple runs in four innings and hit four home runs as in a 16-9 win Wednesday over Western Kentucky in Richmond.

The loss was the third straight for WKU as it fell to 16-11 on the season.

The Colonels (17-20-1) used a pair of six-run innings to jump on top as the 16 runs were the most allowed by the Hilltoppers this season. EKU sent nine men

to the plate in the second inning, getting a two-run single from Shawn Flora, and RBI hit by Aaron Barrows and a Tyler Barnett three-run home run to jump out to an early 6-0 lead.

The second big inning came in the fifth, and was started by a Lucas Waters leadoff home run. That would be the only earned run of the frame, however, as a WKU error with one out allowed Tony Wells to score and opened the door for the Colonels. Run-scoring doubles by Clint

Seymour and Barnett were sandwiched around a three-run homer by Flora in the inning.

Casey Hamilton led the Hilltopper offense as he finished with three hits and three RBIs, while Matt Hightower and Scott Kaskie added a pair of hits.

Ben Paxton (2-1) suffered the loss for WKU as he allowed two runs in three innings of relief.

Western Kentucky returns to action at 6 p.m. Friday in a Sun Belt Conference series against UALR at Nick Denes Field.

Apr. 26, 2007

APR 29 2007

Hilltoppers blast past UALR

By MICHAEL COMPTON

The Daily News

mcompton@bgdailynews.com/783-3247

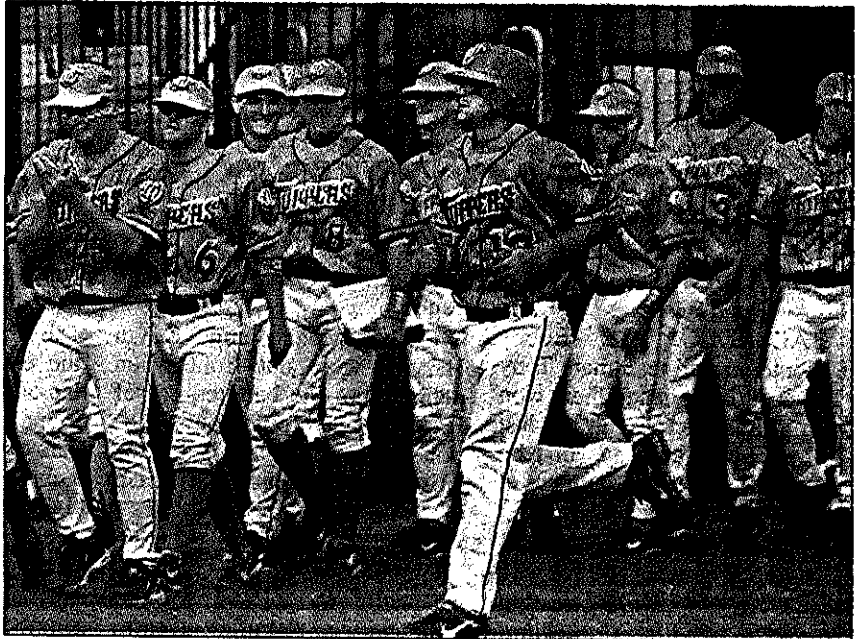
The Western Kentucky baseball team picked up its second straight win over Sun Belt Conference foe Arkansas-Little Rock, blasting the Trojans 14-7 on Saturday at Nick Denes Field.

Less than 24 hours after Western (18-23, 10-10 SBC) won a pitcher's duel, the Hilltopper bats exploded for 13 runs in the first four innings and cruised from there, putting WKU in position to pick up a sweep over UALR (17-25, 5-14).

"We played a pretty good ballgame today," WKU coach Chris Finwood said. "I thought offensively, we put a lot of pressure. We got a big lead and were able to get Matt (Ridings) out of there. He threw a lot last weekend, so that was really beneficial."

Western got a pair of unearned runs in the first, but UALR cut the margin to

See WKU, 3B



David W. Smith/Daily News
Western Kentucky's Scotty Colt rounds third base and heads home Saturday after hitting a home run against Arkansas-Little Rock at Nick Denes Field.

DAILY NEWS, BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY

Spc

From Page 1B

WKU scores eight runs in fourth inning to pull away from UALR

2-1 on a solo homer by Osvaldo Torres in the top of the second.

The Hilltoppers answered with three runs in the bottom of the inning, including a pair of RBI singles by Scotty Colt and Scott Kaskie.

Two innings later, Colt struck again, starting a rally that would give the Hilltoppers a commanding lead.

The senior third baseman broke a 35-game, 142-at-bat homerless drought with a no-doubt shot to left that made the score 7-1.

"I was looking for something I could drive," Colt said. "He hung a slider and I was able to get a hold of it. It felt really good."

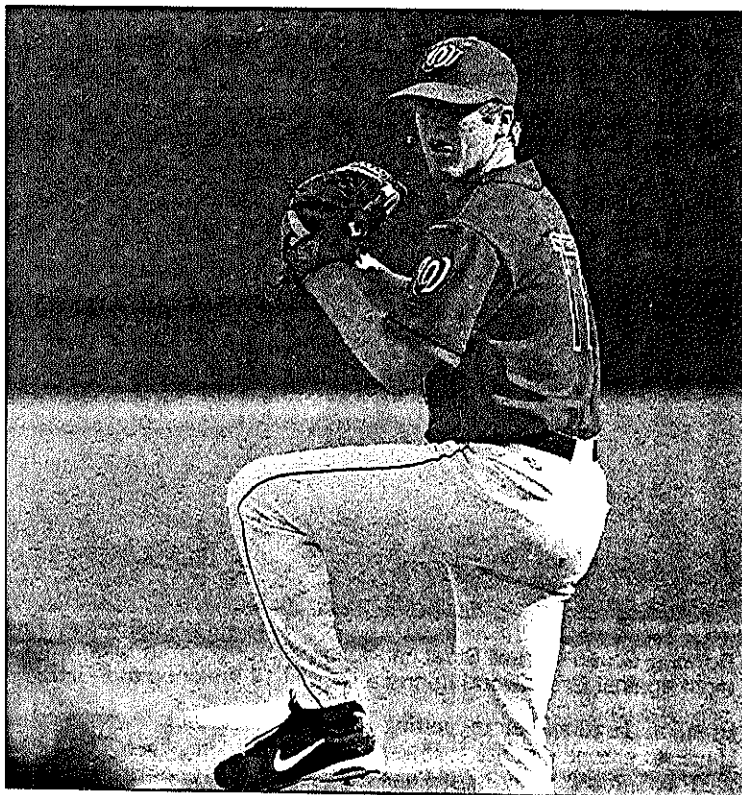
WKU went on to score eight runs in the inning, including a three-run double by right fielder Troy Frazier.

"We wanted to come out today and try to get on them early," Colt said. "We had a lot of guys on and a lot of opportunities. We just came through with some big hits."

The offensive outburst didn't go to waste. WKU starter Matt Ridings ran into some trouble in the sixth but left with a 13-6 lead. The right-handed freshman allowed five earned runs and struck out eight in 5 2/3 innings to improve to 6-1.

"I thought he was a little tired today," Finwood said. "It wasn't his best stuff by any means. He's picked us up so many times, I was glad to see us pick him up today."

WKU added a run in the bot-



David W. Smith/Daily News
WKU's Matt Ridings prepares to deliver a pitch Saturday in the Hilltoppers' 14-7 win over Arkansas-Little Rock at Nick Denes Field.

tom of eighth and reliever Steve Hupper allowed one unearned run and four hits while striking out three in three innings to pick up his third save of the season.

The Hilltoppers finished with 12 hits. Kaskie had three hits, while Colt, Frazier, Terrence Dayleg and Casey Hamilton all had two hits each.

"It's good to see Scotty Colt swinging the bat better," Finwood

said. "I told him (Friday) that I thought he was showing signs of coming out of it. It was good to see him hit a home run. That is going to be big for us down the stretch."

Western will look for the series sweep when it hosts UALR at 1 p.m. today.

Arkansas-Little Rock 010 014 001 - 7 12 4
Western Kentucky 230 800 01X - 14 12 2
WP: Ridings LP: Tolliver S: Hupper

Sweet sweep

APR 30 2007

WKU baseball takes three against Arkansas-Little Rock

By MICHEAL COMPTON

The Daily News

mcompton@bgdailynews.com/783-3247

The Western Kentucky baseball team picked up its first Sun Belt Conference sweep in three years Sunday, breezing past Arkansas-Little Rock 10-4 at Nick Denes Field.

Western (19-23, 11-10 SBC) took control in the first inning and got a solid start by Matt Hightower to move within a game of fourth place behind Middle Tennessee and New Orleans in the Sun Belt standings.

"It's hard to sweep teams," WKU coach Chris Finwood said. "We haven't done that here in a while. I was proud of how we came out and really went after it. I thought it was a great effort by the entire team."

WKU got all the offense it needed in the first inning, sending 10 batters to the plate and scoring six times. The Hilltoppers got seven hits off UALR starter Levi Laughlin, including a two-run single by Troy Frazier that forced the Trojans to go to their bullpen in the first inning.

"We got a lot of big, timely hits — which we haven't gotten at times this year," Finwood said. "Maybe that means we're kind of getting it a little bit."

Western added a run in the second on an RBI double by Wade Gaynor to extend the lead to 7-0 and stretched the lead to 9-0 with two more runs in the fifth.

That was more than enough offense for Hightower. The right-handed sophomore had five previous midweek starts, but Sunday was his first conference start. Hightower threw five scoreless innings before allowing a pair of runs in the sixth. Hightower finished the day allowing four hits, while striking out three Little Rock batters in six innings of work, picking up the first win of his collegiate career.

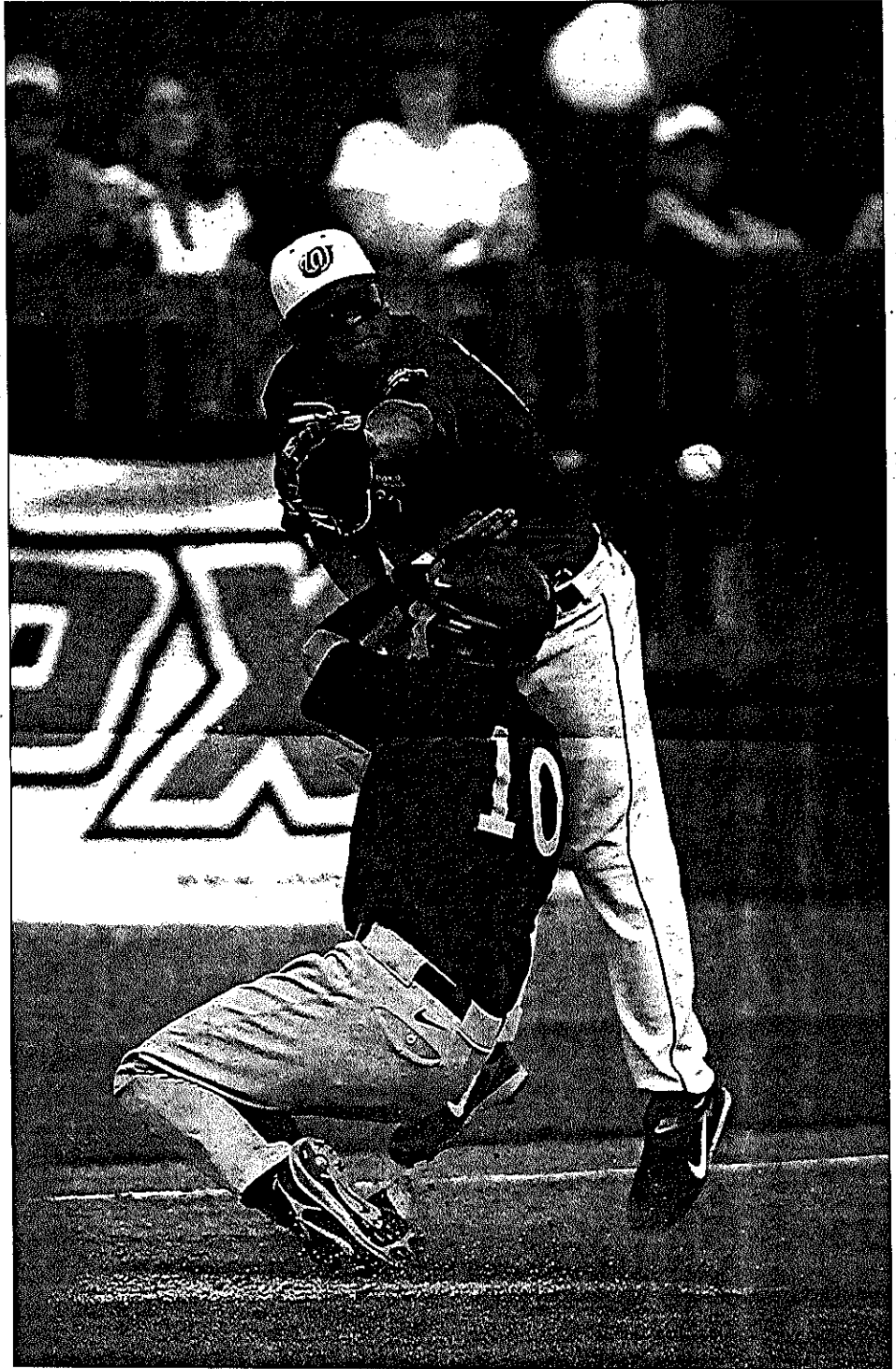
"I had everything working for me," Hightower said. "Everything just came out of my hand real well. I just had a good feel (for the game) today."

Finwood said he was pleased to see Hightower pitch so effectively.

"I thought Matt really did a great job for us," Finwood said. "It was big that we scored for him early in the game and let him settle down. Really, we made an error or he wouldn't have given up any runs there."

Hightower agreed that having the early lead really helped his confidence.

See WESTERN, 5B



Western Kentucky's Scotty Colt (right) reaches for the ball as Arkansas-Little Rock's Tyler Mason slides into third base Sunday at Nick Denes Field. *Lara Cooper/Daily News*

From Page 3B

Western Kentucky gets first Sun Belt sweep since 2004

"My first couple of innings, it's been kind of rough to find a rhythm," Hightower said. "When the offense put up numbers like that for me early, it gave me a lot of breathing room. I was able to relax and not try to make perfect pitches every time."

Western's win didn't come without a little drama in the ninth. The Hilltoppers entered the final inning with a 10-2 lead, but UALR got two runs off reliever Colby Beach and had the bases loaded when Brad Swiderski flew out to center field to end the game.

The Hilltoppers finished the game with 17 hits.

Gaynor, C.J. Wamsley and Terrence Dayleg paced the offensive outburst with three hits each. Dayleg had two RBIs and two runs scored, while Wamsley added a pair of doubles and a run scored.

Scott Kaskie, Casey Hamilton and Scotty Colt all added two hits



Arkansas-Little Rock's Brian Asbill (right) is out at second base as Western Kentucky shortstop Terrence Dayleg throws to first for a double-play attempt Sunday at Nick Denes Field. *Lara Cooper/Daily News*

for WKU.

Western returns to action at 6 p.m. Tuesday, when it hosts

Evansville.

Arkansas-Little Rock 000 002 002 — 4 8 1
Western Kentucky 610 021 00X — 10 17 1
WP: Hightower LP: Laughlin

UNO rallies past Western baseball, wins series

By the Daily News

New Orleans scored 11 runs in the seventh and eighth innings, rallying from an 11-2 deficit to pick up a 13-11 win over the Western Kentucky baseball team Sunday at Maestri Field in the finale of a three-game Sun Belt series.

The loss dropped the Hilltoppers to 21-25 on the year and 12-12 in the Sun Belt, while UNO improved to 31-17 and 14-10 in the league.

After WKU opened an 11-2 lead, UNO broke through against starter Matt Hightower in the bot-

tom of the seventh. T.J. Baxter and Johnny Giavotella led the inning with a double and single and Greg Wolfe followed with a run-scoring double that plated Baxter and ended the day for Hightower. Josh Tarnow lifted a sacrifice fly off reliever Ben Paxton and a Drew Anderson double cut the Hilltopper lead 11-

6. After a walk to Mark McGonigle, pinch hitter Nick Schwaner doubled off the wall in right to bring home the fourth UNO run of the inning. Colby Beach relieved Paxton and got

Brandon Bowser to fly out to center, but McGonigle scored from third on the play. A Butler RBI single capped off the six-run inning that cut the WKU lead to 11-8.

UNO continued its comeback in the eighth as Giavotella led off with a walk and Wolfe was hit by a pitch to bring the tying run to the plate.

Tarnow delivered as he doubled down the third-base line to plate Giavotella and made it an 11-9 game. Ryan Eden followed with a single through the right side to plate the 10th run of the

game for UNO.

After Beach struck out McGonigle for the first out of the inning, Schwaner singled home the tying run. Beach was able to get Bowser to ground back to the mound, getting the out at second, but WKU was unable to turn the double play and Eden scored the go-ahead run for the Privateers.

Joey Butler followed with an RBI single to stretch the UNO lead to 13-11.

Steven Whaley retired the Toppers in the ninth to end the game. Beach (3-3) suffered the loss.

allowing five runs on five hits in 1½ innings of relief.

WKU takes the week off for final exams before hosting South Alabama in the final home series of the 2007 season, beginning Friday at Nick Denes Field.

Kentucky baseball team to a 4-3 win over New Orleans in the opener of a three-game Sun Belt Conference series Friday at Maestri Field.

The win was the fifth straight for WKU — its longest winning streak of the season — as the Hilltoppers improved to 21-23 overall and 12-10 in the Sun Belt Conference.

The Privateers fell to 29-17 and 12-10 in the league.

After going eight innings without a run, the Hilltoppers got something going in the top of the 12th as Casey Hamilton

led off the inning with an infield single, and moved into scoring position on a wild pitch by UNO reliever Stephen Whalen. After a bunt single by Wade Gaynor put runners at the corners, Paxson singled off Adam Campbell to plate the go-ahead run.

Paxton came out for his fourth inning, and proceeded to strike out the side for the second time to close out the game.

WKU collected 15 hits in the game, with Scott Kaskie leading the way with a four-hit performance.

May 7, 2007 Daily News

Western baseball wins opener

Ben Paxton threw 3-2/3 innings of shutout relief, and a J.B. Paxson RBI single in the top of the 12th lifted the Western

May 6, 2007 Daily News

Pitching fails Hilltoppers in final home game

By MICHEAL COMPTON May 16, 2007
The Daily News
mcompton@bgdailynews.com/783-3247

The Western Kentucky baseball team missed a chance Sunday to secure a spot in the Sun Belt Conference Tournament, falling 17-9 to South Alabama at Nick Denes Field.

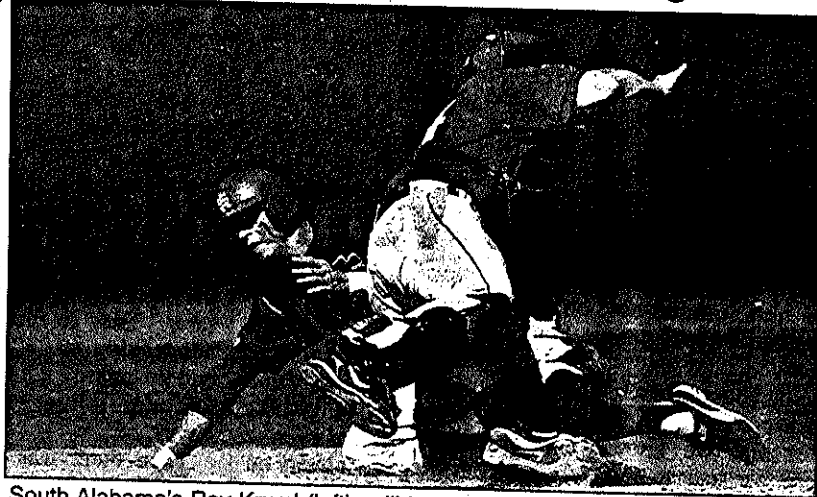
Western, which could have clinched a spot in the eight-team field, held three leads early, but was done in by a 20-hit attack by South Alabama.

"We just didn't get it done today," WKU coach Chris Finwood said. "We didn't pitch well enough. When you give up 20 hits, it's hard to win. They are fighting for their tournament lives and they played like it the last two games."

Most of the problems came from the bullpen, which imploded to give up 12 unanswered runs.

The biggest blow came off senior Liam Shanahan — a grand slam by Joel Collins in a six-run fifth that put the Jaguars ahead to stay 10-8.

Shanahan was blitzed for five runs,



South Alabama's Ray Kruml (left) collides with Western Kentucky catcher J.B. Paxton on Sunday.

without retiring a batter, in relief of Matt Hightower.

"We have not been able to stay away from the five- and six-run innings out of the bullpen," Finwood said. "In the

games we've lost this season, that has been our demise. We're just not there yet on the mound."

Western (22-27, 13-14 Sun Belt
See WESTERN KENTUCKY, 5B

From Page 3B

Western Kentucky bullpen gives up lead to South Alabama

Conference) had a chance to get the lead back with two on and two out in the fifth, but USA reliever Matt Peterson struck out Scott Kaskie to end the threat. The Hilltoppers went in order in the sixth and seventh and South Alabama (27-23, 11-15) put the game away with a five-run fifth and a two-run ninth.

About the only bright spot out of the pen came in the ninth, when senior Miles Ormon — who was limited this season while battling arm injuries — came in and retired the final batter on two pitches.

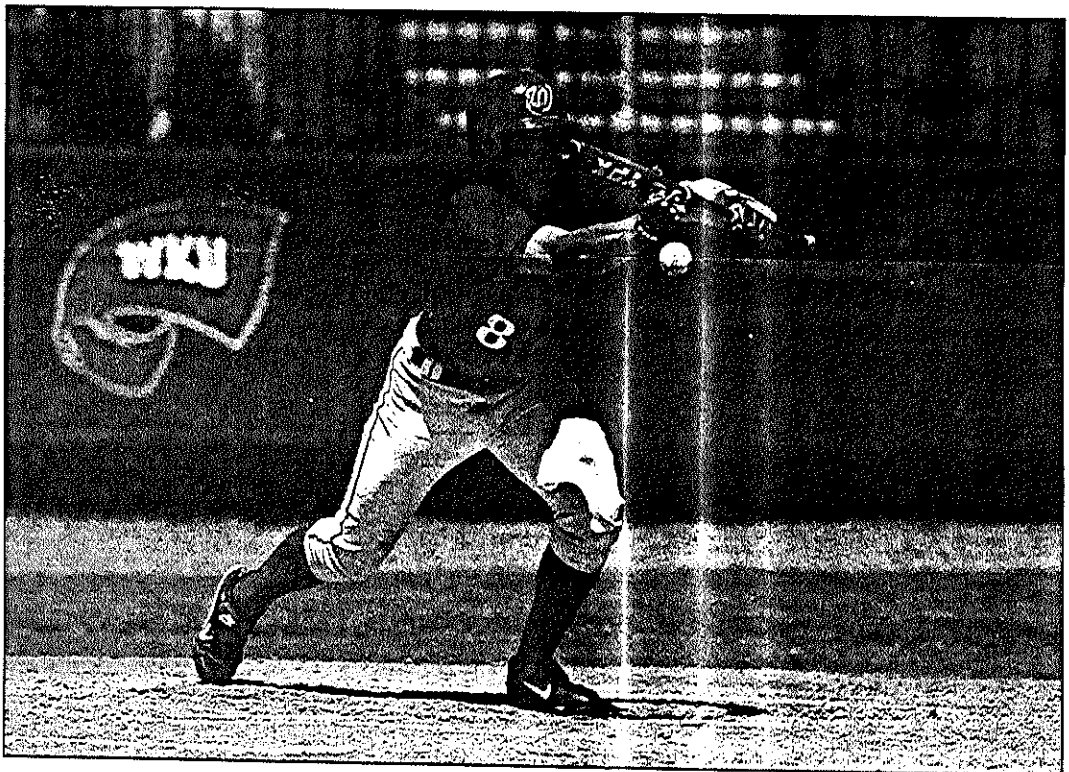
"We wanted to make sure, if at all possible, that we got him in," Finwood said. "He did a nice job for us."

Ormon was one of six seniors honored in post-game ceremonies. For the first four innings it looked as though those seniors would finish their home careers with a win.

The Hilltoppers took a 1-0 lead in the first, but South Alabama answered with a two-run homer by Sean Laird in the top of the second.

Western regained a 4-2 advantage with three in the second, including a two-run triple from Kaskie, but solo homers by Laird and David Doss tied the score 4-4 heading into the bottom of the fourth.

Western sent eight batters to the plate and scored four times — including a two-run single by Scotty Colt — to regain an 8-4 lead, but Hightower gave up a leadoff single that ended his day. The right-hander finished the day



Western Kentucky shortstop Adam Duvall lays down a sacrifice bunt against South Alabama on Sunday at Nick Denes Field.

allowing five runs and eight hits in four-plus innings.

"Matt was just whipped," Finwood said. "He played 18 innings (Saturday) in the field. He gave us everything he had today and I thought he did a good job."

Peterson went 4 1/3 innings of scoreless relief for South Alabama, which remains alive for the Sun Belt Tournament later this month.

With a week left in the regular season, Western sits sixth in the conference stands — a half a game ahead of Florida International and two games ahead of Florida Atlantic. FIU and FIU meet in a three-game series this week, while WKU plays at Middle Tennessee. South Alabama is a one back on the loss side, but now have the tiebreaker over the Hilltoppers after taking two of three

this weekend.

"It's disappointing, but we are still in the same boat. We have to win one more," Finwood said. "When you're not good enough, you're not good enough. We just weren't good enough on the mound today and you have to tip your hat to them."

WKU returns to action at 3 p.m. Tuesday at Purdue.
South Alabama 020 260 052 - 17 20 0
Western Kentucky 130 400 001 - 9 10 1

WKU baseball wins rain-shortened game

By the Daily News

Western Kentucky picked up a 4-3 rain-shortened victory Tuesday at Purdue.

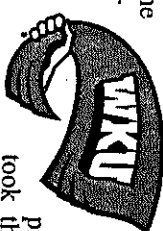
With one out in the bottom of the sixth, thunder-

storms ended the game between the Hilltop-

pers (23-27) and Purdue in West

Lafayette, Ind., but the teams had played enough innings for the contest to be official.

Casey Hamilton's two-run home run in the top of the third put Western up 2-1. Troy Frazier singled and scored on a wild pitch that gave the Hilltoppers a



3-1 lead in the top of the fourth. Frazier padded the lead to 4-1 on a two-out single in the fifth. Purdue cut the Western lead to 4-3 on Jeff Mojzik's

two-run homer in the bottom of the fifth but Western held on before the storms hit. Western relief pitcher Chad Adcock took the victory. Frazier led Western with a pair of hits and an RBI.

The Hilltoppers will close out the regular season with a three-game set at Middle Tennessee beginning Thursday in Murfreesboro, Tenn.

MAY 16 2007

WKU baseball

Hilltoppers lose opener to Middle Tennessee

By the Daily News

Middle Tennessee starter Brad Robinson struck out a career-high 10 batters Thursday over eight innings to lead the Blue Raiders to a 7-1 victory over the Western Kentucky University baseball team in the opener of a three-game series at Reese Smith Field.

The loss dropped WKU to 23-28 overall and 13-15 in the Sun Belt Conference, while MTSU improved to 29-24 and 16-

12 in the league.

MTSU got a run right away in the first when Zach Barrett singled home Matt Ray.

After a pair of scoreless innings by WKU starter Bart Carter, Barrett struck again, driving home Rawley Bishop with a double to give Middle Tennessee a two-run lead. Barrett then scored on a Grant Box single to stretch the lead to 3-0.

Robinson held WKU hitless until

Scotty Colt was able to get a two-out double in fourth.

A Hilltopper error at the start of the fifth inning proved costly as Ray reached to get the frame started. Carter was able to retire the next two batters, but allowed a walk to Bishop and then hit Barrett to load the bases. Adam Warren then came through with a two-run single, and Box singled home a run to stretch the MTSU lead to 6-0.

Wade Gaynor finally got WKU on the board when he led off the seventh with his fourth home run of the season — only the second Hilltopper hit of the game — to make it 6-1. MTSU got that run back in the bottom of the inning as Box singled home Wayne Kendrick.

Robinson pitched a scoreless eighth, and Nick Marrs closed the door in the ninth.

Ray, Barrett and Box each had three

hits for MTSU, with Box driving in three runs. Gaynor, Colt, J.B. Paxson and Troy Frazier accounted for the only four WKU hits of the game.

Robinson (7-2) allowed just the one run on three hits to pick up the victory, while Carter (6-4) suffered the loss as he allowed six runs (three earned) on nine hits over his five innings.

The two teams are back on the field at 6 p.m. today for game two of the series.

May 18, 2007

Hilltoppers end regular season by beating MTSU

May 20, 2007

By the Daily News

The Western Kentucky baseball team closed out the regular season on a high note as it picked up a 4-2 win over Middle Tennessee on Saturday in Murfreesboro, Tenn.

The win gave WKU the series victory over MTSU as the Toppers closed out the regular season with a 25-28 overall record and a 15-15 mark in the Sun Belt Conference. By virtue of Florida Atlantic's

come-from-behind win over Florida International earlier in the day, Western will be the No. 7 seed in this week's Sun Belt Conference Tournament in Mobile, Ala., and will face No. 2 New Orleans at 12:30 p.m. Wednesday.

The Hilltoppers wasted little time getting runs on the board as Matt Hightower hit his second solo home run in as many days in the top of the first. Western stretched the lead to

2-0 the following frame as Matt Payton singled home Scotty Colt.

Colby Beach, who made his second start of the weekend, blanked the Blue Raiders (29-26, 16-14 SBC) over the first two innings, but surrendered a leadoff double to Drew Robinson in the third. After a fly out by Matt Ray, moved Robinson to third, he came home on a Blake McDade groundout to cut the WKU lead

in half.

That would be the only run allowed by Beach (4-3) in his scheduled four-inning start as he allowed MTSU four hits while striking out one. Ben Paxton came out of the WKU bullpen and pitched three scoreless innings - allowing just one hit - to preserve the one-run lead.

"The star of the game was definitely our pitching and defense," said Hilltopper coach Chris Finwood. "I'm really

proud of our guys to come out and win the series - especially after dropping the opener. I feel like we're really carrying a lot of positive momentum heading into the conference tournament."

The Toppers were able to get back on the board in the eighth as Terrence Dayleg and Casey Hamilton began the inning with back-to-back singles. Colt then hit a ground-rule double that plated Dayleg to stretch the lead

to 3-1. Wade Gaynor was then hit by a pitch to load the bases, and Brett Reilley hit Troy Frazier with an inside pitch, forcing Hamilton home to give WKU a 4-1 lead.

Steve Hupper finished out the game for his fourth save of the year, retiring six of the last seven batters of the game. Hamilton and Colt each finished with multi-hit games for WKU, finishing with three and two, respectively.

SPORTS BRIEFS

WKU's Carter named Sun Belt's top freshman

By the Daily News

Western Kentucky starting pitcher Bart Carter was named the 2007 Sun Belt Conference Freshman of the Year on Tuesday at the league's annual pre-tournament awards banquet.

Carter joins Matt Idlett (1996) as the only Hilltoppers ever to win the conference's top freshman honors. He is also the 10th pitcher to win the award since its inception in 1986.

A 6-foot, 190-pound left-hander out of Franklin, Ind., Carter leads the Hilltopper pitching staff with a 3.92 ERA. He made 18 appearances during the regular season, starting 11 games. He hurled a pair of complete games in Sun Belt Conference play, including a three-hit shutout against UALR in late April.

In 78 innings, Carter (6-4) has struck out 61 batters, including a career-best nine punchouts against South Alabama. In 12 Sun Belt

appearances, Carter compiled a 3-3 record with 3.75 ERA, striking out 46 batters in 57-2/3 innings of work.

Carter takes the mound today in the opening game of the conference tournament against New Orleans.

Western baseball falls in tournament opener

Mar 24, 2007

By the Daily News

No. 2 seed New Orleans put up multiple runs in four different innings to pick up an 11-6 win over No. 7 Western Kentucky on the opening day of the 2007 Sun Belt Conference Baseball Tournament at Eddie Stanky Field in Mobile, Ala.

With the loss, WKU (25-29) was to face Florida Atlantic earlier today in the first elimination game of the tournament. New

Orleans (34-23) will play a winners' bracket game against Middle Tennessee at 4 p.m. today.

The Hilltoppers put up a pair of early runs against UNO starter Justin Garcia as Terrence Dayleg hit a two-run home run in the top of the first.

However, UNO took advantage of a pair of defensive mis- cues by WKU in the bottom of the inning. Sun Belt Freshman of

the Year Bart Carter appeared to be getting through an uneventful first as he retired the first two bat- ters, but T.J. Baxter reached on an error to keep the inning alive.

After Baxter moved to second on a wild pitch, and stole third, Johnny Giavotella drew a walk to put runners at the corners. Giavotella then stole second, and Baxter was able to come home on a throwing error for the first Privateer run. Josh Tarnow's sin-

gle tied the game and Carter hit the next two batters to load the bases. Mark McGonigle then delivered a two-run single to put New Orleans in front 4-2.

UNO struck again with two outs in the second when Tarnow hit a two-run homer deep to left-center field to put his club up 6-2. WKU got right back in the game in the top of the fourth on J.B. Paxson hit a three-run home run to pull the Hilltoppers within

one at 6-5.

The Privateers got back in business offensively in the fifth as Tarnow and Drew Anderson had consecutive one-out singles. After Greg Wolfe was hit by a pitch for the third time to load the bases, McGonigle reached on an error, which allowed two runs to score.

Brandon Bowser then lifted a sac- rifice fly that scored Wolfe to stretch the UNO lead to 9-5. WKU got a run back in the

seventh when a two-out single from Casey Hamilton plated Scott Kaskie to make it a three- run game, but the Hilltoppers got no closer.

Offensively, Scotty Colt and Wade Gaynor each had two hits for WKU.

Carter (6-5) suffered the loss as he allowed 11 runs — five earned — on nine hits, while walk- ing five and striking out three in seven innings.

May 25, 2007

Western eliminated from Sun Belt Tournament

By the Daily News

The Western Kentucky baseball team saw its season end Thursday as it was eliminated from the Sun Belt Conference Tournament with a 7-6 loss to Florida Atlantic.

WKU finished with a 25-30 record.

Errors cost the Hilltoppers as they committed three mistakes that led to FAU runs. Combined, the two teams left 26 runners on base — 14 by the Owls and 12 for Western.

For the second straight day, WKU got on the board in its first at bat as Scott Kaskie was hit by a Chris Salberg pitch to lead off the bottom of the first, then moved to third on a Terrence Dayleg sin-

gle. Casey Hamilton then beat out a potential double-play ground ball at first, allowing Kaskie to come home with the game's first run.

Hilltopper starter Matt Ridings allowed baserunners in each of his six inning innings of work, but was able to keep Florida Atlantic scoreless except in two frames.

Daniel Cook led off the third for FAU with a double, and Daniel Bomback kept a ball just inside the line in right for a two- run home run to put the Owls in front 2-1.

WKU scored in the bottom of the fourth inning as Scotty Colt led off with a bunt single, and Wade Gaynor walked. After a Matt Hightower sacrifice bunt put

two in scoring position, Salberg was able to strike out J.B. Paxson on a ball in the dirt. However, the throw down to first was mishandled by Travis Ozga as Colt was able to come home to score and tie the game at 2-2.

That score held until the sixth when Nick Arata and Cook put together one-out hits to put runners at second and third. Bomback then singled home a run to put FAU back in front 3-2, ending the day for Ridings.

Ben Paxton came out of the bullpen and gave up a two-run double to Wladansky as the Owls opened up a three- run lead.

WKU came right back in the bottom of

the inning as Paxson drew a leadoff walk. A one-out single by Kaskie allowed Paxson to move to third, and Kaskie went into second base on the throw to put a pair in scoring position. Tyler Bunting then delivered a single to right to plate Paxson.

ball was misplayed by Kaskie in center as Ozga came all the way around from first to score and stretch the FAU lead to 7-4. WKU refused to go away in the bottom of the ninth, however, as Colt was hit by a Brandon Cooney pitch to lead off the inning, and Gaynor followed with his fifth home run of the season over the wall in left

to bring the Toppers within a run with nobody out. Anthony Bradley came in the ninth when a pair of errors by WKU led to two more FAU runs. After a leadoff walk to Billy Degnan, Ozga reached on an error to put runners at the corners with nobody out. Paxton was able to retire the next two batters, but Bomback singled up the middle to plate a run. On the play, the

to bring the Toppers within a run with nobody out. Anthony Bradley came in the ninth when a pair of errors by WKU led to two more FAU runs. After a leadoff walk to Billy Degnan, Ozga reached on an error to put runners at the corners with nobody out. Paxton was able to retire the next two batters, but Bomback singled up the middle to plate a run. On the play, the

BASEBALL

SEP 21 2007

Purples' Higdon picks Toppers

BY DANIEL PIKE
The Daily News

Bowling Green catcher Brandon Higdon thinks he's found a new home — and it's not too far from his old home.

Higdon, a left-handed senior for the Purples' baseball team, has verbally committed to play college ball at Western Kentucky, according to Higdon and Bowling Green coach Matt Logic.

"Right now, I'm just kind of trying to keep open minded," Higdon said Thursday. "I think Western would be a great place to play, and there's a lot more opportunities to play baseball than at some other (schools) I've talked

to."

Higdon said he thinks his commitment to WKU is firm, although a verbal agreement is non-binding. Higdon said he still plans to visit Danville this weekend to meet with the Centre College coaching staff and players.

Hilltoppers coach Chris Finwood cannot comment on Higdon's status until the national signing period begins in November.

Higdon said WKU felt like a good fit, although he's not necessarily counting on earning early playing time.

"I'm not sure about that," he said. "I'll just go out there and do

what I can."

As a junior, Higdon — who also pitched for Bowling Green — was second on the Purples with a .358 batting average. He led the team with 39 hits, including a home run, and was second with 20 runs batted in.

Logic said Higdon's offensive talents have drawn interest from several colleges over the past year or so. Higdon started catching for Bowling Green last season after picking up the position in summer leagues.

"He's a very good hitter, obviously from the left side, and that helps out a little bit," Logic said. "No doubt about it, he's going to

hit for us, and he's gaining a lot of experience behind the plate. Catching is one of those positions where you have to kind of do it to get good at it."

As a junior, Higdon was a key contributor to the Purples' run to the Region 4 championship earlier this year. Before focusing on Western, though, Higdon said he's eager to help Bowling Green improve on last season's result, the school's first regional title since 2001.

"I just hope that we can get back and win region again," Higdon said. "We'd like to get to the semi-state (round) and make it to the state tournament."



Joe Inel/Daily News
BG catcher Brandon Higdon has verbally committed to WKU.

WKU baseball preview planned

Sept. 27, 2007
By the Daily News

Western Kentucky baseball will hold its annual scout day and fall exhibition game at 11 a.m. Oct. 7 at Nick Denes Field.

An opening workout will be followed by an exhibition against the Ontario Blue Jays, a Canadian junior national travel team.

This will be the public's first chance to see the 2008 Hilltoppers in action since the beginning of fall practice.

WKU baseball adds five to team

By the Daily News,

Western Kentucky baseball coach Chris Finwood

announced today the signing of five players, including three from Kentucky.

Position needs were filled with the signing of shortstop Logan Robbins and catcher Casey Dykes.

Robbins will finish his prep career at Apollo High School in Owensboro.

This past summer he was a part of the prestigious Area Code Games in California, a six-day event held each year that serves as a showcase for professional and college scouts.

Dykes helped lead Franklin (Tenn.) High School to three straight Class AAA state championships.

Following his junior season, he was selected to participate in the Perfect Game USA National Showcase, and is ranked as one of the top 15 catchers in the

country.

A member of the 2007 Tennessee Junior All-Star team, Dykes has compiled a .331 batting average and has driven in 98 runs so far in his high school career.

A trio of right-handed arms round out the signing class, with Craig Stem, Isaac Vaughan and Tyler Gilliland poised to join a stable of talented young pitchers already on the Hilltopper roster.

Stem was a 2007 all-district honoree at Donelson Christian Academy in Nashville.

Stem has also pitched in the summers for the Brentwood Bulldogs, where he was a teammate with current Hilltopper starter Matt Ridings.

Vaughan earned both top pitcher and litter honors last season at Henderson County.

An honorable mention all-state selection, he compiled a 6-2 record while playing for former Hilltopper pitcher Nathan

Isenberg.

Vaughan posted a 1.30 earned-run average last season, striking out 66 batters and walking just 17 in 54 innings of work.

Gilliland enters his senior season at Christian County after earning all-district honors twice in his career.

He was also a Kentucky All-Star and has earned academic all-state honors during his prep career. Gilliland posted a 6-2 record and a 2.49 ERA for the Colonels last season, and finished 9-2 with a 0.79 ERA as a sophomore.

"Once again coach (Andrew) Slater has done a great job as our recruiting coordinator identifying and recruiting this group of young men and their families, and the addition of Matt Myers as our pitching coach has helped us land some top-notch arms in this class," said Finwood, who is now in his third season at WKU.

The Hilltoppers are coming



off a 25-30 campaign in 2007, and will open the 2008 season Feb. 22-24 with a three-game series against Bowling Green at Nick Denes Field.